

A  
GENTLEMAN'S  
Religion.

---

Part II. & III.

---

In which the Nature of the  
Christian Religion is parti-  
cularly enquired into, and  
Explained.

---

LONDON:

Printed for Richard Sare at  
*Grays-Inn-gate in Holborn, 1697.*

JOHN LEWIS

OF THE

Part II. & III.

In which the Nature of the  
Christian Religion is parti-  
cularly explained, and  
Explained.

LONDON:

Printed for William Sturt at  
G. and J. Sturt in Holborn 1697.



*The Preface*

---

---

A Short  
**PREFACE**

To the whole.

**S**ome Men slight  
Religion, whilst  
others corrupt and  
perplex it with things  
either false or unne-  
cessary ; the later of  
A 2 which

## The Preface.

which I look upon to  
be much the cause of  
the former.

Many will not take  
the pains to read much;  
and many do not thorough-  
ly consider, nor will  
digest what they read;  
which renders their  
Notions confused, and  
themselves uncertain  
what to conclude.

I have therefore  
endea-

## The Preface.

endeavour'd to make  
such a short and easy  
Draught of Christiani-  
ty and the Grounds of  
it, as every Man of  
a moderate Capacity  
may read without Te-  
diousness, and under-  
stand without Difficul-  
ty; And which, if it  
does not wholly satisfie  
him, may yet serve to  
put his Thoughts into

## The Preface.

a Method, and himself  
upon seeking for farther  
Satisfaction.

The first Part of  
this small Work I put  
forth some time since ;  
and, finding that it  
has not proved altoge-  
ther unacceptable to  
Men of Judgment and  
Moderation, I have  
been encouraged to fi-  
nish and publish the  
Second

## The Preface.

*Second and Third Parts  
also.*

*My Design is certainly good; and if I have not well performed what I have undertaken, I hope at least that what I have here done, may move some more able and Judicious Person to take the Work in hand, and supply those Defects of which I have been guilty.*

The Preface.

Second and Third Parts

also.

My Design is cer-  
tainly good; and if I have  
not well performed what  
I have undertaken, I  
hope at least that what I  
have here done, may  
move some more able and  
Judicious Person to take  
the Work in hand, and  
supply those Defects of  
which I have been guilt.

ty.

THE  
CONTINUATION  
OF A  
*Gentleman's Religion.*

---

Being the Second PART.

---

I. **T**HE *Holy Scriptures*  
being the only au-  
thentick Record  
that I am able to find of the  
Christian Religion, I take it  
for granted that they do ex-  
press *Divine Matters really and*  
*truly as the things are in them-*  
*selves* : And therefore I can-  
B not

not but believe that all the Doctrin therein delivered is most certainly true, altho many times I am not able to understand the Design and Meaning of some Expressions and Passages which do occur therein. I think it indeed to be very proper, that Men of any reasonable Learning and Prudence should modestly offer their Thoughts to the World, in order to the explaining of such Places of the Scriptures as appear to be abstruse and difficult : *But he who speaks his own Words ( and not those of Scripture ) can therein only offer his own Apprehensions ; to which no Man can be obliged to subscribe, any farther than as he is in his own Reason convinced*  
of



Part II. Religion. 3

of the Truth of them, and their Consonancy with the Scriptures.

2. I do not apprehend that an implicit Faith is due to the Church of Rome which challenges it ( Part 1. §. 21. ) much less sure to any other Church which does not require it. *When, therefore, any Church, much more when any private Men, do offer me any Doctrine of Religion in their own Words, I think I ought to consider, First, Whether what they say is intelligible: ( For tho we may be obliged to believe such things as are above our Understanding to comprehend, ( Part 1. §. 33. ) yet it is impossible for any Man to give an explicit Assent to any Form*

4      A Gentleman's  
of Words, if he does not  
know the meaning of them.)  
Secondly, *Whether it is agreeable to the self-evident Principles of Reason*, for, If I apprehend it to be otherwise, it is impossible for me to believe it. (Part I. §. 33.) Nor must any Text of Scripture be interpreted above the Level of plain and self-evident Reason, whatever the literal Sense may seem to be. And, Thirdly, *whether the Truth of it can be proved by any solid Argument*, either from Reason or Scripture : for tho a Doctrin be both intelligible and possible, yet still it may be false; and therefore is not to be believed except it can be proved. These Rules I have endeavoured

Part II. Religion. 5

voured strictly to observe in the Trial of those Doctrins which I am now about to propose ; and I desire my Reader carefully to make use of the same, in the Examination of all that I shall offer unto him. But here I must desire him to take notice, that I do suppose him to be well acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, and also with the common Arguments, upon which the several Parties of Christians do ground and maintain their Opinions: And therefore, for his Ease, as well as my own, I shall save my self the Labour of mentioning such Arguments and Places of Scripture, as are usually brought to prove those Points which are generally

rally acknowledged by all Christians, and even in those Points which are controverted between different Parties, I shall ordinarily think it enough to hint at some of those Texts, and Arguments, which are used on either side ; of which I can scarce suppose any Man to be ignorant that is but moderately acquainted with the Principles of Christianity, and the several Parties that profess it.

3. *To believe what God makes known, and to do what he commands, is what all Men call Religion : But things that are impossible, 'tis certain that God requires from no Man ( Part I. §. 14. ) When therefore Damnation is denounced*  
*in*

in Scripture *against those who receive not the Gospel, it must needs be understood only of them in whose Power it was to have received it*; and not of such who are invincibly ignorant; either for want of Capacity, *John 9. 41.* or of the means of Knowledge, *Joh. 15. 22.* But for a Man who has both the Capacity and Means of Knowledge, through Negligence, to continue in Ignorance of God's Will, my Reason tells me is a very great Sin; besides all those Places of Scripture which do require us diligently to seek after Knowledge.

4. That *there is a God*, is sufficiently to be proved from our own Reason and Observa-

8      A Gentleman's

tion : *But fully to comprehend his Nature, or declare in all Points what he is, is by all allowed to be impossible to us.*

5. That God never had a Beginning, I think I have sufficiently concluded ( Part 1. §. 6. ) And, if the holy Scripture had not told me that he is from Everlasting to Everlasting; yet my own Reason would have inferred that *he is subject to no Decay, nor ever shall have an Ending.*

6. The Nature of every Material Being seems necessarily to imply a Possibility of having its Parts disjoyned and separated one from another ; and consequently of being dissolved and destroyed : And therefore I conclude, that the  
eter-

Part II. Religion.

9

eternal God does not consist of Matter; and that Being which is intelligent, and does not consist of any material Parts, I call a Spirit: And this is what I mean when I say that *God is a Spirit*. As for those Expressions *the Eyes of the Lord*, *the Arm of the Lord*, and such like, which do occur sometimes in Scripture, and seem to imply Bodily Parts, it is manifestly obvious that they must be purely metaphorical.

7. Our Experience does sufficiently testify that whatsoever is visible to us, is ever material. Since therefore God does not consist of Matter, I conclude that he is *invisible to Mortal Eyes*, as the Scripture

positively declares him to be :  
And all those Texts which  
seem to say, that he has been  
seen by Man, I think must of  
necessity be interpreted some  
other way, *viz.* either, 1. Of  
an Angel appearing in a glori-  
ous and majestatick manner :  
Or 2. Of the eternal Son of God  
assuming a Bodily Appear-  
ance, as after he took our Na-  
ture upon him : Or, 3. Of  
some visible and extraordinary  
Signs and Tokens that the in-  
visible God was there present  
in an extraordinary Manner :  
Or, 4. Of those mystical and  
Hieroglyphical Representati-  
ons which God has sometimes  
been pleased to make of him-  
self, not to the Senses, but to  
the Imagination and Under-  
standing



Part II. Religion. 115

standing of his Prophets, in their extatick Dreams and Visions.

8. Amongst all those things which I can conceive possible to be done, *i. e.* to imply no Contradiction, I can find nothing which to me appears more difficult, than what God has already done in the Structure of the Universe: And therefore I conclude, that God can do whatsoever in its self is possible to be done, which is what I mean when I say, that *he is Almighty*: Nor is there any one, sure, who will venture to say, that God can do such things as imply a Contradiction, either in themselves, or to his own Nature and Attributes.

9. That

9. That God, who made all things, should be ignorant of any thing, appears to me most absurd to imagine. But when I say, that *God is Omniscient*; If there is any thing, the Knowledge of which would manifestly imply a Contradiction, it could surely be no greater Irreverence to say, that God could not know, than that he could not do such a thing. But whether the Knowledge of a future Contingent would imply a Contradiction or not, is a very abstruse and metaphysical Dispute; and except the contrary can very clearly be made appear, I know not how to imagine that God is, or can be ignorant of any thing  
past,

past, present, or to come, however contingent.

10. If God were or could be confined to, or circumscribed in any determinate Space or Place, it would be hard to conceive that his Knowledge and Power should be infinite, and extend to all Places. But I cannot suppose God to be present in all Places after the same manner, as the Air is every where present throughout its Region, or the Light throughout its Hemisphere, for that would imply local Extension; and consequently, that he were a material Being, contrary to what I have said, §. 6. But that God can in an instant exert his Power in any, or all Places, whenever he pleases,

14      A Gentleman's

ses, ( as the Soul can on a sudden move the extreamest Joynt of the Body ) is, I think, an evident Consequence of his Omnipotence ; and that manner of Existence whereby he is able to do this, I call Omnipresence ; and this is all that I am able to conceive when I say that *God is every where present.*

11. That *God is most wise*, that is to say, most perfectly knows what is always fittest and best to be done , and which is the properest way to bring what he pleases to pass, is an evident Consequence from his Omniscience, or rather indeed a Branch of it.

12. From God's Wisdom it necessarily follows, that his  
Conn-

*Counsel is unchangeable.* For he who alters or repents of any thing, which he has once positively determined, plainly shews his Foresight to be imperfect, and his Wisdom defective. When therefore we meet with some Passages in Scripture which seem to suggest that God has decreed one thing, and yet afterwards done another; we must of necessity understand such Decrees to have been not absolute, but merely conditional (a Condition being in many Cases implied, and supposed, where it is not in Words expressed.) And when he is said to have repented of some things which he has done, or to have been grieved thereat, we must needs

16      A Gentleman's

needs interpret such Places in a metaphorical Sense, with an Allusion to those Motions and Passions in Mankind; just as *Hands, Arms, Eyes, &c.* are on the same account sometimes ascribed unto him, tho really he has no such-Members, no more than he has the Passions, which belong to Men.

13. I do most evidently find in my self a Power to choose at all times what I please, and to determine my own Actions as I will my self: And this I look upon to be a greater Perfection in me, than if I were absolutely necessitated and determined by somewhat without my self, in every thing which I should do.  
Since

Part II. Religion. 17

Since therefore I derive this Perfection originally from God, who is the Contriver and Author of my Being, (Part I. §. 7.) I cannot but ascribe the same in the highest Degree to him, who must be the Fountain of all Perfection. And therefore I most readily believe that *God is a free Agent*; and worketh all things after the Counsel of his own Will.

14. How Justice, in a strict Sense, is to be ascribed unto God, who owes nothing to any one, and has a supreme and most absolute Dominion over all things, as having made them purely at the Motion of his own Will, I look upon to be a nice and useless Dis-

Disquisition: But the common Rules of Justice, which Men are obliged to observe one to another, to me do appear to be so very reasonable, that I cannot apprehend why any one, of Knowledge and Understanding, should ever vary from them, except thereby he might propose either to advance his Interest, compass his Pleasure, or wreck his Malice; neither of which I can imagine to have any Place in God. I therefore conclude that *God is Just*, even according to the common Rules of Justice and Equity, as far as they can be applied to him.

15. Veracity to me appears to be no less agreeable to Reason  
son



son than Justice, if it be not rather a Part of it: And since I am able to imagin no Shadow of a Reason why God should declare any thing which were false; I cannot but believe that *he is most true* in all that he says.

16. That God should hate those Creatures which he has made (except they by their evil Actions and Disobedience do deserve it) is not to be conceived: And as he who loves another is always ready to pardon his Faults (especially if they have any way proceeded only from Frailty and Infirmary) upon his true and sincere Repentance; so if the Person beloved continues obstinate and incorrigible in his  
Trans-

Transgressions, he, with all the Reason that can be, forfeits that Love which he once enjoyed, and justly incurs such Penalty as may be suitable unto the Obligations which he has broken, and the Quality of the Person he has offended. I therefore conclude, That *God has originally a Love for all Mankind, and that he will be always merciful unto such Sinners as are truly penitent; but strict and severe in the Punishment of those who go on in the Breach of his Laws without Repentance.*

17. *Nor are those Calamities which so often follow us in this Life, or God's visiting the Sins of the Fathers upon the Children (which can be understood only*

ly of temporal Afflictions ) or his punishing the wicked with extreme and everlasting Misery, any manner of Derogation, either to his Justice, or his Love and Mercy towards Mankind, since temporal Afflictions may well be looked on as the Effects of his Love, as being designed to wean and purge us from the Love and Filth of this World, and to make us more fit for Heaven ; and Eternal Damnation ( of which we have fair warning given us, and may therefore avoid it if we please ) is as little as can be threatened ( and often is but too little ) to keep us back from all manner of Sin and Wickedness.

18. That some sort of Actions are eternally and essentially good, that is to say, to be approved of by every impartial rational Being (e. g. to love him from whom we derive our Existence, to perform our Promise, and such like) and that the contrary Actions hereunto are therefore essentially and eternally evil, is to me from hence sufficiently evinced, because that if all Beings, which are endowed with Reason and Understanding, should universally set themselves to do those things which now are accounted evil, and to omit those things which now are esteemed good; the Consequence of this must necessarily be universal

versal Confusion and Misery. Now that God loves and approves of all Actions that are good, does evidently appear, because such Actions do tend to the general Happiness of his Creatures, whom he loves, §. 16. and for the contrary Reason it will follow, that he hates and abhors all Actions that are evil. And this is what I mean when I say, That *God is most holy.*

19. All possible Excellency or Perfection that I can conceive, is reducible unto these Five Heads, viz. 1. Perfection of Being, which consists in perpetual Duration, without any Decay or Infirmary. 2. Perfection of Understanding, which consists in such Know-

24      A Gentleman's

Knowledg and Wisdom as is free from all Mistake or Ignorance. 3. Perfection of the Will, which consists in a free Liberty to choose or refuse, without any Constraint or fatal Necessity. 4. Perfection of Power, which consists in an Ability to do every thing. And 5. Moral Perfection, which consists in an inflexible Resolution always to do and encourage that which is morally good, and to avoid and discourage whatsoever is morally evil. Now, since all these Perfections are in God in the most absolute manner; as I think I have shewn in the foregoing Paragraphs, from hence it will follow, That *God is most absolutely perfect.*

20. And

20. And since he who is absolutely perfect can stand in need of nothing ; it must also follow, that *God is most perfectly happy in Himself.*

21. As my Reason do's evidently demonstrate unto me the Being of a God, so does it not in the least suggest to me any Argument to conclude that *there is any more but One God*: And it is absurd and unreasonable to multiply Beings without any Ground or Reason for it.

22. That there is a real, and not only a nominal Distinction, between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost or Spirit ; that they are frequently spoken of in the Holy Scriptures in such Terms as

C

we

we ordinarily use when we speak of Three Persons ( altho sometimes this Expression, Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit, may be put to signifie not so much the Person, as the Power, Effect or Energy of God's Spirit ) That, altho the Son be often spoken of as really and truly a Man, yet many things are said of him which cannot agree to a meer Man, or to any created Being whatsoever; and that there are such things also spoken of the Holy Ghost, as cannot be accommodated unto a Creature: Moreover, that the Son derives his Being from, and always depends upon the Father, as the Holy Ghost does from, and upon the Father  
and



and the Son: All these things, I say, in my Opinion, are not to be denied by any one, who will but interpret the Holy Scriptures according to the ordinary Sense and Signification of the Words thereof, and not according to his own Prejudices or preconceived Opinions. And altho the *Socinians* do clearly enough expound some of those Texts of Scripture, which, with more Zeal than Reason, are sometimes urged against them; yet, as to the principal Passages, which are alleged to prove what I have now asserted, I think their Interpretation of them not only to be harsh and strained ( which in a manner is acknowledged even by their

own acute and brief Histori-  
 an, in the last Paragraph of  
 his second Letter ) but also,  
 many times, to be utterly ir-  
 reconcileable unto the Words  
 and Context. And now ( to  
 explain those Conceptions  
 which arise in my Mind upon  
 the Consideration of the Texts  
 here hinted at, as well as, in a  
 Matter so abstruse and remote  
 from my Senses, I am able )  
 since I cannot find a more  
 proper Term to express the  
 Distinction of *the Father, Son,*  
*and Holy Ghost* by, *I call them*  
*Three Persons ; and,* not know-  
 ing what other Title to give a  
 Divine Person who is no Crea-  
 ture, *I call each Person God :*  
*But I give the Title of God in a*  
*more emphatical manner unto*  
*the*

*the Father than unto the Son or Holy Ghost*, because the Father depends on none, but they do depend on him : *And*, since both my Reason and the Holy Scriptures do teach me to own no more than one God, I am of necessity compelled to say that *these Three are so united together* ( tho in such a manner as is above my Understanding ) *as to be but one God*. And altho it argues a great deal of Imperfection in Humane Speech, that, for want of other fit and proper Terms, we are forced to give the same Appellation to each Person singly, and to the Three conjointly ; yet this does not imply any manner of Contradiction, as some do object ;

30      A Gentleman's

because, when we apply the Word *God* to one single Person, it has not the same *exact* and *adequate* Signification, as when we ascribe it unto the Three Persons conjointly ( for that would imply that each single Person were, at the same time, the Three Persons; and so confound that Distinction which the Holy Scriptures do so often and apparently make between them;) And this analogical Difference, in the Signification of the Word *God*, will easily solve most of those Objections which the *Socinians* do bring against the Doctrin of the Trinity. And because I know no better Word to express that Unity which I apprehend to be

be

be between the *Three Persons*; I therefore say, that they are *One in Essence or Substance*. For Unity of Concord or Consent alone, does not seem enough to me to denominate them to be One God. And because I find that *the Son is said to be begotten, and the Holy Ghost to proceed, or be sent, or emitted*; I therefore make use of these Terms, without pretending to assign the Difference between Generation and Procession: And altho *the Son and the Holy Ghost, being each of them God, are, and must needs be, of the same Nature, and, upon that account, equal with the Father*; yet it is manifest that this Equality must be understood

32      A Gentleman's

with an Allowance for the absolute Independence of the Father, and the Dependence of the Son and Holy Ghost upon him.

23. All the Objections that I can remember to be made against the Doctrin of the Trinity thus stated, I think, are easie enough to be solved by what I have now said, excepting Two, which must be particularly answered. The first is taken from *Joh. 10. 33.* &c. But tho our Saviour did not here assert his Divinity when there seemed to be occasion for it, yet it will not follow, that therefore he is not God : Especially if we consider, that it was not always his Custom to give full and  
com-

compleat Answers unto such captious Questions and Objections as were put to him: But sometimes he contented himself only with shewing the Unreasonableness of those who proposed them ; of which we have one Instance, *Mat.* 21. 23. &c. and another *Joh.* 8. 3. &c. and, as some think, another, *Mat.* 22. 17. &c. And we may as well conclude, that he had no Authority for what he did, because he did not declare it when the Chief Priests and Elders questioned it, *Mat.* 21. 23. as deny his Divinity, because he did not expressly maintain it, when on that account he was charged with Blasphemy. The other Ob-

# 34 A Gentleman's

jection is drawn from *Mar. 13. 32.* But to it I answer, That our Saviour's Design, in that Place, being only to represent the Day there spoken of as a Secret not to be made known unto Men until it should come upon them ; that they might always stand upon their Guard, watch, and prepare for it: Let but the Word *know* be taken to signifie to *make known* ( which fully answers the Design of the Place, and, as it is evident, *St. Paul* uses the same Word, *1 Cor. 2. 2.* *I determined*, says he, *not to know*, that is, not to make known or teach, *any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified*: and then the most natural Paraphrase of  
of



of that Place will be this, *But that Day and Hour there is no one who shall or can make known unto you; no not the Angels which are in Heaven; (who may be supposed to be ignorant of it themselves) nor even the Son himself (who altho he knoweth all things, Joh. 21. 17. yet can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do, Joh. 5. 19. And who speaketh not of himself, but the Father which sent him gave him Commandment what he should say, Joh. 12. 49.) But the Father only shall in his own time, make it known by bringing it to pass. And this Exposition of this Place of Scripture (which is the only Text that seems to press very hard upon us in this Controversy)*

verſy ) I am ſure, is much more eaſie and natural, than *many* of thoſe Interpretations, which the *Socinians* do advance, of the principal Paſſages which we urge againſt them. But if any one ſhall tell me, that this whole Matter concerning the Trinity, is very obſcure and difficult to be apprehended; and therefore, that it is unreaſonable to require the explicit Belief of ſuch Doctrin, as neceſſary, either to Salvation or Church-communion: As to the Obſcurity, it is not to be expected that it ſhould be otherwiſe, ſince, in this Life, we know but *in part*, and prophesie *in part*, and ſee but *through a Glaſs darkly*, or *in a Riddle*, as  
the

the Margin has it Word for Word from the Original, 1 Cor. 13. 9, 12. As to Church-communion, I shall speak of it hereafter in its proper Place: And as touching Salvation, I refer my Reader to what I have said, §. 3. and Part 1. §. 14. and §. 26.

24. Either the Matter of this visible World did from all Eternity coexist together with God, or else it was produced from Nothing by him, there being no Third Way to be assigned: Now both these Ways being above, tho neither of them contrary to my Reason; my Reason alone can never solidly determine which of them is the right. But the later of these making  
most,

most, in my Opinion, for the Honour of God (of whom, as being the most perfect Being, I think I ought to entertain the most glorious Thoughts that possibly I can;) and the Holy Scriptures so often ascribing Eternity without Beginning unto God, in an emphatical manner, as his alone peculiar Attribute, I am thereby brought to believe, that *the Matter of this World* is not eternal, but *was at first created by God from Nothing*; and consequently, that God can again annihilate it, or any Part of it, if it should so please him.

25. That God did contrive, frame and fashion this World, and every part of it, and also that he still preserves and governs

*verns it by his Providence,*  
I have formerly concluded,  
Part I. § 7. and §. 10. And  
tho every ignorant Person is  
not able to dive into, and fa-  
thom the Counsels of a great  
and Sovereign Prince ; yet  
this is no Argument that he  
does not manage and rule his  
Dominions with due Care and  
Wisdom : Nor could the  
making, nor can the Govern-  
ment of the World be any  
manner of Trouble to God (as  
the *Epicureans* objected) since  
he is absolutely Omnipotent,  
and needs no more but to  
speak the Word and the thing  
is done.

26. It is very evident that  
the Heathen World its self was  
generally and strongly ad-  
dicted

dicted to the Belief of certain Beings ( some good and some evil ) superiour in Nature to Man, but subject to, and Ministers of the Will and Pleasure of the supreme God. But the Holy Scriptures do give us a more full and perfect Account of this Matter, *viz.* that God created certain *Spiritual Beings, called Angels*; that is to say, Messengers, as being sent forth by him to execute his Will upon all Occasions that he thinks fit; and particularly to minister for them who shall be Heirs of Salvation ( not that God has any need of their Assistance or Ministry, any more than he has of the Worship and Service of Man; but only thought fit to  
cre-

create them of his own good Will and Pleasure ; and probably that they, as well as Man, might be Objects for him to exercise his Goodness and Beneficence upon.) But whether every particular Person, State and Kingdom have their proper Guardian Angels, appointed them by God, is not, as I can find, upon any sure Grounds to be determined. *But* we are farther informed, that *of these Angels some sinned, and therefore kept not their first Estate*, but were cast down into Hell, and delivered into Chains of Darknes, to be reserved unto Judgment; *the Chief, or Prince of whom is called the Devil*, the great Dragon, the old Serpent and Satan,

tan, *and is, together with his Angels, permitted by God to range to and fro in the Earth, to tempt even the Godly, but to prevail and work in the Children of Disobedience.*

27. That an eternal Succession of Men, or any other Beings, without a Beginning, is absolutely impossible, I have, I think with Reason, already said, Part I. §. 6. That Man at first was not fashioned by any blind and undesigned Chance, is to me very evident, as well from the wonderful Frame of his Mind, as from the great Variety, Regularity and Usefulness of all the Parts of his Body, and particularly his Organs of Sensation: And that he



Part II. Religion. 43

he did not at first spring up out of the Earth by any Force of Nature, distinct from the Power of God, I think needs no Proof, because the contrary Supposition is not only without any Ground of Evidence, but also liable to so many monstrous Improbabilities as do render it highly extravagant to imagine. I therefore must conclude, That ( at the least ) *the first Male and Female of Mankind were immediately framed and fashioned by God : and that all the rest of them were and are derived from those two by the way of natural Generation* ( Christ Jesus excepted, who tho born of a Woman, was not begotten of a Man ) is the plain Voice of the Holy Scripture.

28. That

28. That Man, tho made a little lower than the Angels, is yet by Nature far more excellent than any other living Creature, is sufficiently apparent. The Holy Scripture tells us, that God made Man after his own Image : But this Expression cannot be understood with respect to the Shape and Structure of the Human Body (God being both incorporeal and invisible) but is, as I apprehend it, to be interpreted altogether with relation to those Faculties which are implanted in the Mind of Man, and that internal Uprightness in which he was at first created ; which do carry in them an evident Similitude and Analogy unto some of those

those Attributes and Perfections which are in God himself. That *the Body of Man is made originally of the Earth*, by which it is nourished, and into which it is again resolved, is obvious to be collected from Reason : *And if I had never been told that God breathed into his Nostrils the Breath of Life, whereby he became a Living Soul*, yet those Powers and Faculties which I find in my self, of Thinking, Judging, Drawing Consequences (and those sometimes in a very long Train) reflecting back upon my own Thoughts, and determining my own Actions as I please, together with that inward Satisfaction which I reap from doing what is morally

46      A Gentleman's

rally good, tho naturally and to my Body painful and uneasy ; and the Trouble which I find upon the doing of any thing which is morally evil, tho otherwise never so pleasant and delightful, would, I think, have sufficiently taught and assured me, that there is a Principle within me, which, tho united to my Body (and thereby affected with its Delights or Pains ) yet is really distinct from it, and of a different Nature and more noble Original, which I call my Soul.

29. That God , who has originally a Love for all Mankind, §. 16, should have created any Man with an Intent to make him eternally and  
una-

unavoidably miserable, is to me a Contradiction : And since, on the contrary, he has naturally implanted in every Man a vehement and unextinguishable Desire of being Happy, and of always remaining so, I cannot but conclude, that *God intended Man at his first Creation unto eternal Happiness.* For that he should implant the Seed and Principle of such a Desire in us all, which never fails to spring forth and shew its self in every Man who comes to Years of Knowledge ; and this to be only a Torment to us, without any Possibility either of suppressing or satisfying it ; is, I think, not to be conceived, except we should suppose that  
at

48      A Gentleman's

at the first he made us to be Objects, not of his Love, but Hatred.

30. As even by the Ruins of a noble Structure we may be able to give a Guess how goodly the Building was at its first Erection; so when I at present consider how distorted the Nature of Man is ( his Lusts and Passions always struggling with, and often getting the Victory over his Reason, which evidently was designed for the superiour Faculty) own my Understanding alone methinks suggests to me, that *Man was at first created in a more perfect and upright State and Condition than what he is in at present: But how our Nature was so far perverted, as*  
that

that all our Reason and Endeavours cannot again reduce it to that firm and perfect Regularity, in which we are sensible it ought to be, and therefore have cause to believe that it was at first framed by God, is what of our selves we never could have collected from any Suggestions of our own Understanding.

31. Whether the second and third Chapters of the Book of *Genesis* are all to be understood literally, or whether an allegorical Interpretation is in some parts to be admitted, I think my self not much concerned to debate. But, which way soever we take, the plain Result will be, that whereas God placed our  
D first

first Parents, at their Creation, in a state both of Innocency and Happiness; they by transgressing his Law, and thereby incurring his Displeasure, fell both from the one and the other. Now that they, by their sin, might deprave their own Natures, and vitiate their Constitutions, is no way irrational to suppose: And that from the depraved Nature and vitiated Constitution of Parents divers inconveniences may be entailed upon their Posterity (who do derive not only their bodily Temper and Complexion, but frequently also their Passions and Inclinations from those of their Parents) is what common Experience does daily



ly testify. When therefore *the Holy Scripture assigns the sin of our first Parents, as the Cause of the Corruption of the Nature of Mankind*, I see nothing therein which is not very reasonably to be allowed.

32. He who grants a Favour to another, barely and only of his own free will and pleasure, may without any violation of Justice, whenever he pleases, withdraw that, which he is under no Obligation to continue any longer than he thinks fit. Nor is it any way to be reckoned as unmerciful or cruel, to cease the continuance of a purely voluntary kindness, if the stopping of it does not render the Person actually miserable with-

52 A Gentleman's

out any fault committed by him. If therefore God had thought fit, even for no other reason but his own Pleasure, to divert the stream of his kindness from Man ; and that altho he had continued in a State of Innocency, provided he had not put him into a state of unavoidable Misery ; who could have any just reason to complain, or find fault with him for doing what he should please with his own ? Much more then will it follow that, If upon the occasion of our first Parents Transgression, and the Corruption of our Nature which thereupon ensued, God had resolved to cut us all forever off from the inheritance of those Blessings to which  
Man

Man was designed at his first creation, but now rendered naturally unfit for, by this original pollution; even in this there had been nothing contrary to the strict Rules of Justice or Mercy: Especially if we consider, that all the World have ever thought it reasonable that, in some cases, Children should, on account of their Parents Faults, lose some benefits and advantages which otherwise they would have enjoyed. But actually to inflict a positive Punishment upon any one for a Fault which he never committed, nor any way voluntarily concurred to, nor was at all capable of hindering in him who committed it, being so directly contrary,

not only unto Mercy, but also to the common Rules of Justice ; I can not but conclude, that *tho' the original Corruption of our Nature may be reckoned as a just occasion why God might, if he had pleased, have excluded us all for ever from the Joys of Heaven ; Yet that alone is not to be assigned as a Cause why he will doom any Man to the Torments of Hell*, who does not otherwise deserve it, by his own actual sins and Transgressions.

33. That by the Corruption of our Nature we are all of us mightily inclined to things that are evil and immoral, is most evident from our constant Experience : But that we have not thereby lost all knowledge

knowledge and power of doing that which is good, I think is no less apparent from the Writings and Examples of so many brave Heathens ; Who having no other Divine Law but that which was written in their Hearts by the Suggestions of their natural Understanding, yet both taught and did so many of the things contained in the written Law of God. But curiously to distinguish and assign the Bounds between Nature and Grace ( which are both the Gifts of God ; the one in an ordinary, the other in an extraordinary way ) and to pretend to shew how far we may go by the bare strength of Nature, and where it is that we just stand

in need of supernatural Assistance, I look upon to be a work of very little use or benefit; but of extraordinary difficulty, and perhaps impossible for any, but God himself, to perform. Moreover, how God will deal with those who have no other Guide to follow but the Light of Nature; How far he will punish their Sins, be merciful to their Ignorance or Infirmities, or reward their endeavours to do good, is a Secret of which we are no way able to give any particular account. But it may suffice us to know, that the Generation of *Mankind by reason of the Corruption of their Nature being apparently in a worse condition in respect of eter-*  
*nal*

Part II. Religion.

58

*nal Salvation, than what they otherwise would have been; God was pleased to determine that he would not deal with them according to that absolute Sovereignty which he had over them, nor according to the strict and rigorous Rules of Justice, which might have justified the greatest Severities; but according to the inclinations of his Mercy and Loving kindness. Of which way of Gods proceeding with us, I come now to give an account.*

34. That God might, if he had pleased, without the violation of any of his Attributes, have freely forgiven all the Sins of Mankind, and even restored our Nature again to its primitive Integrity and Up-  
D 5 rightness,

## ¶ A Gentleman's

rightness, seems naturally to follow both from the Absoluteness of his Authority, and the Almightyness of his Power: And even the strictest Justice, tho it fully allows, yet does not compel any one to exact a Debt where he is the only Creditour, or a Punishment where he is the only party injured or offended. But if *God has thought fit to deal after another manner with us; and rather offers to help our Infirmities, as occasion requires, than wholly to repair our perverted Nature; and chooses to have an Expiation made for our Sins, rather than to remit them without any such consideration; Altho his Will and Pleasure is enough to silence all our Exceptions,*



tions, and justifie his proceedings; yet may there some probable Considerations be urged in order to make us clearly apprehend the Wisdom of God in the fitness and reasonableness of this his Dispensation: As namely, that hereby we are, or ought to be made more continually sensible of our constant Dependence upon him, of his great Mercy and Compassion for us, of his perfect Hatred and Abhorrence of sin.

35. It cannot, I think, be doubted but that, at the very time of the Fall of man, God, who is infinitely wise and knowing, and therefore stands in need of no time to deliberate, had fully determined what he would

would do in order to the Expiation of our Sins, and the helping of our corrupted Nature, so as that we might be again in some capacity of recovering that Happiness to which we were at first designed, §. 29. And that this work of *our Redemption was to be performed by the Means and Mediation of an extraordinary Person*, who was to be sent into the World, under the Title of the Messiah, or the *Christ*, is abundantly evident, both from the Old and New Testament; especially if we compare them and expound them one by another. But it is certain, that Christ did not immediately come into the World; nor was there any one for some Thousands of Years

Years after the Fall, who so much as pretended to that Title or Office; Whether it were, that God thought it fit by some previous Dispensations to prepare the Minds of Men for the reception of so extraordinary a Person, or for what other reason, I pretend not to determine; but think my self obliged intirely to submit to the Wisdom of God, who thought fit so to order it, that the Messiah should not appear until that fulness of time which he had appointed for it. In the mean while, altho the great Light was not yet to come into the World, yet God suffered it not to be wholly overspread with Darkness; But besides the Light of the  
visible

## 62 A Gentleman's

visible Creation, which declares the Glory and eternal Power of God; and besides the natural Light which arises in every Mans Understanding, whereby they who have no other Law, are a Law unto themselves, unto which their own Conscience is a Witness beyond exception; God was pleased in a supernatural way to reveal himself unto divers persons (to the intent that they might teach the Knowledge of him to others) as to *Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek, Job*, and probably to many more than we read of (Amongst whom, why *Balam* should not be reckoned, I can see no reason; altho Covetousness and the hopes of worldly Advancement

vancement tempted him to make but an ill use of the good Gifts of God) And also to chuse out unto himself a peculiar People, namely that of *Israel*, and to vouchsafe unto them a more than ordinary knowledge of Himself and his Laws, by his Servants *Moses* and the Prophets : And lastly by his Providence to order the matter so, that the Writings of *Moses* and the Prophets should many years before Christs coming, be translated into the Greek tongue ( which was then the most universal Language ) that by them all Nations might have the more Instruction, and so be the better prepared to receive the Messiah, whenever he should be

be made known unto them. And for this reason also it seems to be, that God so long before the Mosaick Law, ordained and appointed the Sacrificing of Beasts; whereby it became the common practice of the Gentiles, as well as Jews: Not that he had any esteem or value for the Blood of Bulls or of Goats; but only that by this practice the Minds of Men might be the more easily and readily disposed to own and rely upon that great Sacrifice, which Christ was one day to make of Himself for them.

36. There are several Prophecies dispersed up and down through the Old Testament, plainly designed to foretel the  
coming

Part II. Religion. 65

coming of the Christ or Messiah, what sort of person he should be, and what he should do and suffer: As that he should be the Seed of the Woman, of the Progeny of *Abraham*, of the Family and Lineage of *David*, born in *Bethlehem*, and born of a Virgin: That he should come into the World about the time that the Scepter and the Law-giver, that is to say, the force and power of civil Authority, should cease from the Tribe of *Judah*, and should finish his Work in the compass of the last seven Years of those Four hundred and ninety, which are pointed out by the Prophet *Daniel*; That by many he should be despised and rejected

66      A Gentleman's

ed, should be a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Griefs, be oppressed and afflicted, yet bear it most patiently, and at last be wounded and cut off, not for himself, but for our Transgressions. And yet for all this he is foretold to be a person wonderful, a Counsellour, the mighty God, the Prince of Peace, of the increase of whose Government there should be no end, and unto whom the gathering of the Nations should be. Now altho there may some Difficulties be started as to the Interpretation of some of those and such like Prophecies, which do occur in the Old Testament (which is no great wonder, considering  
how



how the Jews, who are enemies to Christianity, have endeavoured to obscure and perplex them ) yet if we do consider that there is evidently a fair, consonant and reasonable Application of all these Predictions to be made unto Jesus of *Nazareth*, and that there is not, nor ever was any other person to whom they could be applied, besides himself ; and since it is not possible for any one, but God, to foretell a thing with so many circumstances so long before it comes to pass, I think I may very well from hence conclude, not only against the Jews, who acknowledge, but also against all others, who may perhaps at first deny the Authority of  
the

the Old Testament, that *Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ* or Messiah, whom God had promised to send into the World: And if to this we add the greatness of his Miracles, and the transcendent Goodness of his Doctrine ( of which see Part 1. §. 19 ) I think the Argument will have the force of a Demonstration.

37. In the Holy Scriptures I find such things spoken of Christ as do plainly shew him to have been a true and real Man ; in all things like unto us, sin only excepted : Other Expressions also I find frequently applyed to him, which cannot possibly agree to any Man, or created Being whatsoever, but only unto God ;

God ; as I have already said  
§. 22. And altho there is a  
plain Distinction made be-  
tween his Divine and Humane  
Nature, yet is he always  
spoken of but as one person.  
Here then I know not better  
how to express my Sentiments  
than by saying, that in the  
one and single Person of *Christs*,  
there is a Conjunction of both  
the Divine and Humane Na-  
ture, and consequently that  
*Christ* is really and truly *both*  
*God and Man*. And if the  
same Objection be made a-  
gainst this Doctrine as is a-  
gainst that of the Trinity,  
*viz.* that it is very obscure and  
difficult to be apprehended ;  
I shall also return the same  
Answer, as I have already  
done

70 A Gentleman's

done to that in the latter end of §. 23. to which I refer my Reader.

38. He who acknowledges Christ to be God, to be sure will allow of his eternal Existence, as to his Divine Nature; And, as to what concerns his Humane Nature; that *he was Conceived by the Power of the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary*; and that, after some years spent in preaching and doing good, he was, thro the Malice of the Jews, and at their vehement desire, condemned by *Pilate* the Roman Governour, to be *crucified*; which was accordingly done, and a Spear thrust into his Side; That being *dead* he was *buried*, and lay in the Sepulcher unto the

the *third day* ; upon which *he rose from the dead*, and after several times conversing with his Disciples for the space of Forty days, that he *was* visibly taken up from them, and *received into Heaven* unto infinite and eternal Glory, *where he is our perpetual Mediatour and Intercessour at the Throne of God* : All this, I say, is so evidently and without Controversy testified by his Disciples ( whose Veracity I have asserted, Part I. §. 19 ) and recorded in the Scriptures of the New Testament ( whose Authority I have proved Part I. §. 23. &c. ) that no reasonable Man, I think, can now deny, or so much as doubt of any part of it : And altho there are one or two passages

passages of Scripture, from whence it is inferred, that *Christ* before his Resurrection *did descend into Hell*, yet will I not venture, nor do I think it necessary, to determine whether by the word *Hell* is meant the state of the dead only, or the place of the damned; or (if the latter signification be to be chosen) for what end and purpose it was that he descended thither. Only I conclude certainly, that it was not to suffer any thing there; because I do not find the least intimation throughout the Scripture of any suffering of *Christ*, which he did or was to endure, beyond the shedding of his Blood and yielding up his life upon the Cross.

39. What

39. What God might have done (had he so pleased) without any other consideration, but only by virtue of his own absolute Authority; if he has rather chosen to do it for the sake of Jesus Christ, and in consideration of that Obedience which he performed, and those Sufferings which he underwent, who shall dare to find fault with him, or pretend to be wiser than he? Now that *it is for the sake of Christ, and of his Obedience and Sufferings, that God vouchsafes to us the Pardon of our Sins, and makes us the offer of everlasting Happiness,* is so plainly declared in many places of the Holy Scriptures, that nothing can be more. And since I find

E

God's

God's sending of Christ to be set forth as an instance of his Love, not to some few particular persons only, but even to the whole World; and since Christ is said to have died for all, and to have been a Propitiation for the sins of the World, without any exception; I cannot but conclude, that all men who ever were, or are, or shall be, might have been, or may be the better for Christ and his Sufferings, if through their own default they have not, or shall not forfeit that Benefit which was designed them. And as it is not disputed, but that the ancient Patriarchs, who by Faith foresaw the coming of Christ, had a share  
in



in that Redemption which he wrought, altho they died before he came into the World ; so to me it seems to stand with a great deal of reason, that even those persons who never heard any thing of Christ, may yet for his sake find Mercy from God ; because God, who perfectly knows the most secret Inclinations of all Hearts, may clearly foresee, that if the knowledge of Christ had been proposed and offered unto them, they would have owned him, and submitted unto his Gospel ; which our Saviour tells us, was the very case of *Tyre* and *Sidon* ; and for which reason he declares that they should receive a milder Doom than *Chorazin*

and *Bethsaida* in the day of Judgment, *Mat.* 11. 21, 22. And how far this may extend to all such as labour under very strong Prejudices, altho not strictly invincible, I think that God is the only proper Judge.

40. But however God may think fit to deal with those, who are either ignorant of, or strongly prejudiced against the Christian Religion; yet the manner of his proceeding with true Believers is plainly enough declared. All those who receive and own the Christian Faith are not to be looked upon as so many separate persons; each of them believing such and such Doctrines; but are always re-  
presented

presented in Scripture as Joyn-  
ed together in one Society or  
Body, which is called the  
Church, of which Christ Je-  
sus is the chief or Head; and  
under an obligation to live in  
communion and fellowship  
one with another, under those  
Laws and Constitutions which  
Christ has given them; but  
not, that I can find in Scrip-  
ture, obliged to joyn with,  
or submit to, any one person,  
as the Vicar of Christ and the  
visible Head of the Church  
upon Earth. For if Christ had  
appointed any such person as  
his Deputy upon Earth, he  
must either have declared a  
matter of such consequence  
with great plainness and evi-  
dence, or else it would be very

hard to find fault with any man for being mistaken in it: Whereas the Arguments which those of the *Church of Rome* bring to prove, either that such a Vicar there must be, or that *St. Peter* the Apostle was the Man, or that the Pope or Bishop of *Rome* (and not the Bishop of *Antioch*) is the Successour of *St. Peter* both in his Bishoprick and Authority; are all so weak and precarious, so forced and perplexed, and so fully confuted by the Protestant Divines, that nothing in my Opinion but Blindness of Understanding, or worldly Interest can prevail with the Members of that Church, still to insist upon them. Now that *Christ* instituted but one Church, in which

which all true Believers and good livers, are for ever to be comprised, is very plain. And altho, through the Mistakes and Perverseness of Man, this Church is rent and divided into opposite, and contending parts, and parties; yet this does not hinder but that according to its true and primitive Constitution, it is, or ought to be one (as a Kingdom or Commonwealth by its Laws and Constitutions is but one Society, altho there may arise Factions and different Interests in it) nor shall any Man be esteemed as a Member of the Church before God, who is not ready and willing, according to the best of his power and knowledge, to maintain

the Unity of it, and that upon those very Terms, and none other, which Christ has appointed, as near as possibly he can find and apprehend them. Moreover, that all the Laws and Constitutions on which Christ has founded the Church, and by which he would have it regulated, are exactly agreeable unto the Rules of sound Morality, and the Will of God, cannot be so much as doubted ; and therefore it is truly said, that *the Church is Holy*, altho every particular Member thereof has both his frailties and his sins ; which yet he must repent of, and so become holy as the Church is holy, or else he violates one of the main and funda-

fundamental Laws, and so becomes as it were an Out-law of the Church, and forfeits his part in all the Privileges that belong unto that Society. And whereas, before the coming of Christ, the People of *Israel* did enjoy more of the Favour of God, and had greater privileges and advantages, on the score of their being God's chosen and peculiar People, than any, or all other Nations of the World; The Gospel of Christ, on the contrary, now looks upon all as equally entitled unto God's Favour (and the advantages thereon depending) who take care duly to qualifie themselves for it. So that whereas formerly *the Church* (that is, the chosen

E 5

sen

82 A Gentleman's  
fen People of God) might  
have been said to be particu-  
lar, as being in a manner  
limited to one Nation or Peo-  
ple; now on the contrary, it is  
*Catholick*, that is to say, uni-  
versal, as being no way con-  
fined to one place or Nati-  
on; all People being equally  
chosen by God in Christ, who  
will receive and love accord-  
ing to the Gospel.

41. In those several Revela-  
tions which God was pleased  
to make of himself after the  
Fall of Man, unto *Adam*, to  
*Abraham*, and to the People  
of *Israel*, there was still a plain  
intimation given them, that  
in the time to come there  
should an extraordinary Per-  
son arise in the World, who  
should



Part II. Religion. 83

should yet more clearly make known the Will of God to Mankind. But when Christ, who was That Person, did accordingly come, and send his Apostles to preach the Gospel over all the Earth; he neither suggested to them, nor they unto the World, that any other Revelation was ever after to be expected; But always gave them to understand, that God had in the Gospel compleated and finished all that declaration which he intended to make of Himself, or his Will, unto Mankind, until the general Judgment and Dissolution of the World. If therefore the Holy Scripture had given me no manner of assurance of the perpetuity of  
the

84      A Gentleman's

the Church; my own Reason would have been enough to make me conclude, that God in his Providence will so order the matter, as that *the Christian Religion*, being the only known and ordinary means of eternal Salvation, *shall never be wholly extinguished* while the World lasts, so as to stand in need of any new Revelation to revive and restore it. But that there shall always be a certain Company of Men, evidently conspicuous to the World, teaching and professing the true Christian Religion, without any Errour or Corruption in Doctrine or Worship, is what I can nowhere find promised or foretold, either by Christ or any  
of

of his Apostles. On the contrary, there are several passages in the New Testament, which do plainly seem to foretell that, in process of time, most pernicious Doctrines and practices should prevail and take place, even amongst the generality of those who should profess themselves to be Disciples of Christ. And whosoever shall but lightly compare the state of Christianity for several Centuries before the Reformation, with that Draught of it which is left us by Christ and his Apostles in the Holy Scriptures, must, if he be impartial, I think be fully convinced of the truth of those Predictions.

42. Whether or no God has,  
or

## 86 A Gentleman's

or does at any time communicate or bestow any extraordinary Grace or Assistance upon those, who are no visible Members of the Church, but altogether strangers unto that Revelation which he has made of himself, is a question which the virtuous lives and heroick actions of some brave Heathens make it hard positively to determine in the negative. But that *he will give so much Grace and strength to every one who shall become a Member of Christ's Church,* as that thereby they may (if the fault be not their own) sufficiently qualify themselves for eternal Happiness, by the performance of those things which he requires on their part to be done,

done, is what I think no man can doubt of, who does but in general consider the Mercy and Love which God designed, even unto all men, but more especially unto the Church, in sending our Saviour Christ Jesus into the world; altho there were not any particular Promises of this nature in the Gospel: And that this *Grace and ability to do good is in Scripture ascribed unto the Ministry and Influence of the Holy Ghost upon the hearts and minds of true Believers*, is plain and generally owned by all Christians. But that this influence of God's Spirit does not work so uncontrollably, but that it may be resisted, and even wholly rejected and lost,

lost, is I think sufficiently obvious, as well from Reason and Experience, as from those passages of the Holy Scripture wherein we are exhorted not to quench the Spirit, but to walk in, and be led by, the Spirit, and the like; which were apparently needless and to no purpose, if the operations of the Holy Spirit upon our Hearts were so strong as that we could not chuse but comply with them. Now *the things which God requires* to be performed *on our part*, in order to life everlasting, are apparent, and can be no more but to believe those Truths which he has made known, which is called *Faith*; and to observe those Precepts which  
he

Part II. Religion. 89

he has commanded, which is called *Obedience*. And as I have already shewn that these things are required from no man beyond the measures of possibility, Part I. §. 14. So does the Scripture most fully assure us, that *God will* in them make a very sufficient allowance for the ignorance and frailty, and even for the perverseness of our Nature; and will not only be merciful unto our Weaknesses and ordinary Failings, but will pardon and *forgive even our greatest and most wilful Sins, upon our true and hearty Repentance, which is a part of our Obedience*: And as for the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is said to be absolutely unpardonable, I do  
not

not think it needful to enquire here into the Nature and Consequence of it, but shall refer my Reader to that excellent Sermon of Dr. Tillotson, the late Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury*, upon that subject. But here it is highly necessary that we should all take that Caution, which both Reason and the Holy Scriptures do give us, *viz.* That we should not presume so much upon God's Mercy and Lenity, as from hence to take occasion of going on in our Wickedness: For Kindness thus abused will certainly turn into the highest Wrath, and much increase the Damnation of a Sinner.

43. I am inclined to think, that those Arguments which  
are



are drawn from the nature of the Humane Soul it self are not by themselves sufficient to prove that it is immortal; but on the contrary, that the eternal duration of any created Being depends not so much upon its own Nature, as upon the Will of God, who created it. But as Reason alone suggests unto us, that there is a Life to come after this, Part 1. §. 13. And that Man was at first designed by God unto life eternal, (Part 2. §. 29.) so does the Holy Scripture most clearly assure us, that *they who perform what God requires, shall be happy to all Eternity; and they who do not so, shall be miserable without end.* The reconcilableness of  
which

which with God's Justice and Mercy I have accounted for  $\phi$ . 17. But wherein this Happiness of the righteous shall consist, we can but very imperfectly tell ; and whether the Punishment of the wicked shall literally be in everlasting Fire , or whether that expression be only made use of Metaphorically, to signifie the greatness of the Torment, I think it not necessary to determine. But both my own Reason and some places of Scripture do seem strongly to suggest, that neither the Reward of good men, nor the Punishment of the evil, shall be equal unto all ; but greater or less according as they have exceeded one another in the Holiness or Wickedness

Wickedness of their Lives.

44. That all Men are mortal, is sufficiently testified by our daily Experience : But that the Souls of Men immediately upon their separation from their Bodies are not in a state of Insensibility ; but are straitway conveyed into a state, either of Joy or Misery, seems very apparent to me from St. Paul's desire to be dissolved that he might be with Christ ; from our Saviours Promise unto the Thief upon the Cross ; and from the Story or Parable of the Rich man and *Lazarus* ; as also from some other intimations which the Holy Scripture gives us. But since *there is*, one day, *to be a general Judgment*

94 A Gentleman's

*ment of all mankind before the Tribunal of Christ, where every man must receive his Sentence for eternal, either Happiness or Misery (as the Holy Scripture does assure us) It seems not irrational to judge, that neither the righteous nor the wicked do receive their full and final portion until that Judgment be passed upon them. I know not therefore how to condemn those, who anciently took up the Custom of praying for their deceased Friends, who had lived holily and died piously, that they might find favour and acceptance at the general Judgment, and have their portion of Glory augmented; But I can by no means approve of those, who*

who upon such pitiful suggestions have presumed to determine that there is such a place as Purgatory, where the Souls of men are to be purged and suffer a temporary Punishment before their admission into Heaven. And altho I look upon their praying for the dead to be a mistake, rather than a sin, yet their taking of Mony for so doing, and raising such a Revenue upon that Fund, I look upon to be a most ungodly Cheat and Imposition upon the People.

45. Altho I do not apprehend that there is any natural decay in the general frame and structure of this World, yet it is certain, that by the Power

Power of God, who made it, it may, whenever he pleases, be destroyed and dissolved; and the Scripture assures us, that it shall be so *at the time of the general Judgment*; at which time also *there shall be an universal Resurrection of the Bodies of all those who have died*, and a change of those who shall be then alive. But whether all the same individual Particles of each mans Body which have been laid down in the earth, shall be raised and reunited again to their Souls, I look upon to be a needless Enquiry. What St. Paul says upon this Argument, 1 Cor. 15. 35. does abundantly satisfy me; the purport of whose words I take to be this, *viz.* That God,

God, who being the Author of Nature, has given such a vegetative power to a Grain of Corn, that when it is thrown into the Ground, and there macerated and dissolved, it springs up again, and brings forth a Body suitable and proper to its self; that that same God, I say, both can and will at the last day, from the dead and dissolved Bodies of Men, raise up such Bodies, as shall please himself. And as there is a continual and great change of Particles in the Humane Body, between the Birth and the Grave; so I see not what Absurdity would follow if we should allow also that there is a like change between the Grave and the Resurrection.

46. And thus I have endeavoured to give a brief and plain account of that part of Christianity which is purely or chiefly doctrinal; which upon the most strict search that I have been able to make, I think is exactly agreeable to the tenour and main design of the Holy Scriptures, and no way contradictory to the Principles of plain and sound Reason. And if in many other Points of Speculation, which by some are adopted into Religion, I am either wholly ignorant, or perhaps doubtful and undetermined, or, it may be, mistaken; Yet if to the Belief which I have here professed, I do superadd a virtuous and Christian course  
of



of life, I hope there is no moderate Christian, who does not in effect make it a part of his Religion to be uncharitable, but will allow that I may be saved. But wherein this virtuous and Christian life consists, and what are the Duties which the Gospel obliges us all to perform (whether they are the Duties of pure Morality, as to love God and our Neighbour; or those of positive institution, as to be Baptized, to receive the Holy Communion &c.) is to be the subject of the Third and last part of this small Work; to which therefore, I now proceed.

A

## *Gentleman's Religion.*

---

### PART III.

---

I. **A**LL the Commands of God, and consequently *all the Duties of a Christian*, are reducible to these Two; *viz. To abstain from that which is evil, and to do that which is good, according to his ability.* Those actions I call good, which either are eternally agreeable unto the nature, circumstances and mutual relations of Persons and Things,

Part III. Religion. 101

Things, and therefore for ever to be approved of by every impartial rational Being (as I have said Part 2. §. 18.) for which we must appeal to every mans Reason (as we do to his Eyes, without any other Demonstration, to prove that the Sun shines) or else are expressly commanded by God, of his own positive will and pleasure (to whom, as being his Creatures, we all owe an intire Obedience) for which we must have our recourse to the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament only; all the positive Institutions and Ordinances of the Mosaick Law, which were given by God to the People of *Israel*, being abrogated, and the Ob-

F 3

ligation

ligation of them annulled by our Saviour Christ; Altho the moral part of it, which contains the Precepts and Rules of eternal good and evil, and wherein the very life and soul of that Law consisted, be not only abetted and confirmed, but also very much improved by him. And such actions as are contrary to good, that is to say, either disagreeable to the nature and circumstances of Things and Persons, or else positively forbidden by God; I call evil. I am indeed of opinion, that in the Holy Scriptures we have not only the positive Commands of God, whereby some things, which otherwise would have been indifferent, are enjoined  
or

or forbidden; but also, either in particular, or at least in general, a sufficient account of all those actions which are eternally good or evil, and therefore to be done or avoided by us; And this designed by Almighty God for the direction and instruction of those Men, who have not ability to dive into, and discover those things by the strength of their Reason. And therefore, in order to describe the whole Duty of a Christian, it might be enough for me to collect the Precepts and Prohibitions which God has given us in his Word, and to vouch no other Authority or reason, but his Will for them. But because every mans Duty will probably

F 4

bably make the greater impression upon his mind, when he is satisfied, as to the reasonableness of it, as well as convinced of its obligation; I shall endeavour, as I proceed, first to infer as much of our Duty as I can, from the nature and circumstances of Things and Persons; and then to superadd, where there is occasion, what God has positively ordained and commanded as to any point; And this with the same conciseness that I have observed in my Second Part, neither enlarging upon those Arguments, nor reciting those Texts of Scripture, which I suppose my Reader to be able to call to mind upon the least hint of them,

2. To

2. To begin then: Since *God* is the most perfect and excellent Being in Himself; and so loving and beneficent to Us, It follows, that *we ought to love him in the highest degree that possibly we can*; And true and compleat Love, as it is an act of one person exerted towards another, as its object, consists in an unfeigned desire, First, of always doing what may be truly grateful and acceptable to the person beloved; and Secondly, of enjoying and being with him as much as may be. The more ardent and zealous we are in our love to God, the better undoubtedly it is; And we should strive to engage our Affections, as well as our Rea-

son and our Will, unto him from whom we have received all things : But yet this Love is not to be measured, or judged of, by the earnestness of those suddain motions, which sometimes may arise within us, upon the contemplation of God's Excellency and Goodness ; because to be thus *Passionately* affected is not wholly in our Power ; and sometimes least so, when we most earnestly desire it. But the true and certain way of judging whether we love God, or not, is by examining whether we are stedfast in our Resolutions, and accordingly diligent in our Endeavours, constantly to obey him, and keep all his Commandments ;  
which



which is the only way to please, and consequently to enjoy and for ever be with him : And where the Love of God is thus firmly rooted in the *Will*, and brings forth plenty of Fruit in the life and actions, it is certainly nevertheless acceptable to him, altho it does not so passionately move our Affections as we could wish or desire : And as all the Duties which we owe unto Almighty God, are derived from, and do depend upon that, of loving of him ; or rather indeed are contained in it, so is it very evident, that they are all to be judged of by the same forementioned Rule ; that is to say, not so much by the strength of an inward

108 A Gentleman's

ward Impulse upon the Mind ( which is a thing not under our Command ) as by the steady agreeableness of our Will and Actions, unto all such Principles, as are right and good.

3. Since God is the most excellent and perfect, and consequently the most worthy, of all Beings, that are, or can be ; from hence it will follow, that *we ought to honour him with the greatest Honour that may be.* Now to honour any person is, in other words, inwardly to esteem, and outwardly to shew our Respect to him. Our inward Esteem of God consists in a due Acknowledgment of his Being and Attributes ; and our outward

ward Respect to him, is to be shewn, as well by abstaining from all actions which may favour of any Neglect or Irreverence towards him, as by performing all such as may appear to be suitable, both to his own Excellency and our Dependence upon him.

4. Since God is present in all places, and knows all, even the most secret things; and therefore cannot possibly be deceived, or imposed on; *We should, on this consideration, be very watchful and careful, upon all occasions, how we behave our selves in his Presence:* And, methinks, it is a most shameful and deplorable thing, that Men commonly scruple, not to do those things  
in

in the sight of God, which they would be afraid, or ashamed it should be known, or even suspected, of them, by Men like themselves.

5. Since God is most true ; from hence it will follow, that *we ought to believe whatsoever he says or makes known*, how improbable soever otherwise it might seem to us. But the true estimate of such belief is not to be made by the clearness and strength of our speculative Assent unto those Truths, which he has proposed to our Understanding ( for to receive a Truth without any Doubts or Scruples, which sometimes do unaccountably force themselves upon us, even in the clearest cases, is not always in  
our

Part III. Religion. 111

our power ) But rather by the constant suitableness of our lives unto the profession of such Doctrines as we receive and own. And he who has but a weak Faith, and yet leads a good life, altho he is not qualified for doubtful Disputations, is nevertheless a true Believer ; because his Belief answers the main end and design of the Gospel ; which I have shewn to be Virtue and Morality, Part 1. §. 42. Nor can there ( for example ) be a better Evidence, that a man does really and sufficiently Believe the Truth of a life to come, than when he is industrious and diligent in preparing for it ; whatever Doubts or Scruples he may have, in  
point

point of Speculation, about it.

6. Since God's Power is infinite, and his Authority uncontrollable; it follows, that *we ought to fear him* ( and so much the more, because of our natural propensity to sin ) because he has it always in his Power to make us miserable here, and eternally so hereafter. But he cannot be said to fear God most ( that is, most truly ) who is possessed with the greatest dread and terrour at the thoughts of his Wrath or Judgments; for then the Devils, who tremble, or wicked Wretches, who despair of God's Mercy, would be the best performers of this Duty: But he is the truest Fearer of  
God,

Part III. Religion. 113

God, who always takes the greatest care not to offend him; the Fear of him being never originally designed to torment and disquiet our Minds, but only to be such a Check upon us, as to keep us in due Awe and Obedience.

7. Since every sin is an Offence, both against a gracious and a powerful God, and of every dangerous consequence to the person who commits it; And since nothing can possibly be concealed from God, it follows, that *we ought to be deeply concerned, and truly sorrowful for every sin which we commit, and by no means to palliate or frame Excuses for them, but freely to own and confess them to him.* But the truth

# 114 A Gentleman's

truth of this Sorrow is not to be measured by the Passionateness of it, or the Tears which it produces ( which, tho sometimes good signs, yet, too often produce but little effect ) but by the hearty reformation of life that follows: And he only can be said, to any purpose, either to be sorry for his sins, or to confess them to God; who is careful for the time to come to forsake them.

8. Since God is Almighty, he is certainly able; and since he loves us, he cannot but be willing, to do every thing that is best and fittest for us, if we, by our own faults, do not provoke him to the contrary: From whence it follows,



lows, that, as long as we serve him faithfully, *we ought, in all our wants and exigencies, to trust and rely upon him.* And if he does not relieve or help us in such a manner as we desire; *we ought to bear whatever Afflictions we lie under, patiently and contentedly;* as well knowing, that God takes no delight in grieving us; but only corrects and keeps us under, in order to our eternal good. And to demonstrate our Trust in God, and submission to his chastising hand; we must never attempt, by any unlawful means, to supply any of our Wants, or free our selves from any, even the most grievous pressures: Altho, at the same time, honest labour

# 116 A Gentleman's

labour and industry ( yet still with submission to God's Will ) for the compassing of any thing which is lawful and good, is not only allowed, but commended and required.

9. But since God is a free Agent, and since all the good which we have, or are capable of, comes from him, and depends altogether on his Power and over-ruling Providence; *we ought to pray to him for whatsoever we stand in need of;* and that he would bless all our honest Labours with success. But because, often, if we had the very things which we desire, they would, at the last, tend to our hurt; and because he knows what is fit for us,  
much

much better than we our selves; therefore *we ought always to pray, that his Will should ever take place rather than our own.* And since we can have no reason to doubt of his Love, we ought to assure our selves, that we shall receive either the very things we pray for, or else that which is altogether as good for us, if our sins obstruct it not.

10. And the very same considerations, which prompt us to make our Prayers to God in all our wants, do sufficiently demonstrate, that *we ought to return Thanks unto him for all the Blessings which we have received*; Amongst which those Afflictions which have at any time reclaimed us from sin,  
and

and brought us to a sense of our Duty, ought, I think, to be placed in the chiefest rank: And the only Demonstration of a truly thankful Heart to God, is the making a pious and honest use, to his Glory, of all those Blessings which we daily receive from him: Nor can there be any thing more absurd, than for a man to pretend to give God Thanks with his Lips, who does not also do it, more to the purpose, in his Life.

II. As God's Justice and Veracity are a reason beyond exception, why *we should without Anxiety depend on all his Promises*; so the great Promise which he has made us, being that of everlasting Happiness;

piness; for our more effectual attaining unto which, he has sent his Son our Saviour Christ Jesus to suffer for us; *It is therefore accordingly our Duty to hope for eternal Salvation*; that is to say, to expect the performance of what God has promised, and the enjoyment of what Christ has purchased for us. But this hope is to be shewn not by the strength of our Confidence that we shall be saved (in which it is very possible that a man may deceive himself) but by our constant care in duly performing what God requires, on our parts, in order to Salvation: For he only who is diligent in doing the work, does, with any reason,

son, expect, or hope for the promised Reward.

12. *As we are obliged to pray unto God for all that we want, and to hope for eternal Salvation from him; so the Holy Scripture directs us, to ground all our hopes of Happiness upon the Sufferings of Jesus Christ, and to offer up all our Prayers in his Name, as hoping only for his sake to be accepted, who is represented as our only Mediatour and Intercessour with God. Whosoever therefore offers to joyn the Merits, Mediation or Intercession of any Saint, together with Christ Jesus, either to strengthen his hopes of Salvation, or to make his Devotions more surely to be accepted by God;*  
as

as he seems to distrust the Mediation of Christ, as if, alone, it were imperfect and insufficient ; so he acts not only without any Warrant from, but even contrary to the plain tenour of the Holy Scriptures.

13. That it is absurd to attempt, and impossible to make, any bodily or visible Picture or Image to represent God, who is both incorporeal and invisible, is most evident beyond doubt or denial : And when any such Representations are made with that design, and exposed to the view of the People, the natural consequence of them, must needs be to beget wrong Notions of God in the Minds at least of

G

the

the more ignorant sort: For such as any thing is represented to them, such they will be apt to conceive it in all points to be. My Reason therefore alone would sufficiently conclude, that *it is unlawful to make any sort of Picture or Image to represent God*, altho he had not so positively forbid it in the Holy Scripture; nor so expressly declared himself a jealous God in that particular.

14. In all Cases where one man may deceive another to his great damage; it is reasonable that he, who apprehends such danger, should not depend upon another man, except he first has good security given him of his Truth and Fidelity.



Part III. Religion. 123

Fidelity. Now many times the best, or indeed the only, security which can be given in such cases, is a solemn Appeal to Almighty God ( who is the Searcher of all Hearts, and the Punisher of all Wickedness ) as expecting and freely offering one's self to his Wrath and Vengeance, in case he prevaricates in what he asserts or promises: And this is what we call by the Name of an Oath. And since he who takes an Oath ( I mean with due seriousness and consideration ) does therein make an evident acknowledgment of some of the principal Attributes of God; viz. his Omniscience, Justice, Truth, and Power; it follows that an

124 A Gentleman's

*Oath, duly taken*, is an act of Honour and Reverence towards God ; and consequently, *is not*, in its self, *unlawful or evil* : But *if an Oath be taken rashly, or unadvisedly, or unnecessarily, or in trivial cases ; it is* a lessening and undervaluing of the Divine Majesty ( which ought always to be treated with the profoundest Reverence ) and, consequently, *sinful and unlawful*. And this is all that I can conceive to be forbidden by our Blessed Saviour, *Mat. 5. 34*. Nor can I apprehend that, that place contains an universal prohibition of all swearing whatsoever : For, besides that the very Context in the preceding Verse does most evidently

limit

limit the discourse to such Oaths as are purely voluntary, and therefore altogether unnecessary; There is neither Reason nor Precedent to induce any one to believe that our Saviour would universally forbid any thing which has nothing of Evil or Malignity in its nature: And some even of the best of Men, not only before, but since the coming of Christ, and even the Blessed Angels themselves, we are assured in Scripture, have sworn upon some occasions with great solemnity. Nor do the Holy Scriptures, in other places, where mention is made of the taking of an Oath, speak of it as a thing unlawful, or forbidden, or any way

126 A Gentleman's

universally evil in its self, but altogether the contrary : Nor did our Blessed Saviour, that we can find, design to deprive Princes or Magistrates of any part of that lawful Power which they had over their Subjects before his coming ; who, every where, were invested with a Right of exacting an Oath from Them, when it should be necessary, either for the peace and security of the Common-wealth, or for the ending of Differences between private parties. And as for that passage of St. James 5. 12. which is by some urged against swearing in any case whatsoever ; It, being no more but a recapitulation of our Saviours words

words which were just now mentioned, needs no other Answer than what I have already given. But since the very nature and design of an Oath is to invoke God, that thereby a Man may give assurance to another of his truth and fidelity; it follows, that *to affirm any thing upon Oath, beyond what the Man, who swears, knows to be true; or not to perform what he has upon his Oath promised, is a sin.*

And since he who imposes upon another by doubtful and equivocal words, does as much deceive him, as he who speaks a down-right Falſity; from hence it will follow, that *such a deceitful Oath is altogether as contrary to the*

nature and design of an Oath, and consequently as *unlawful* as a false one. But altho an Oath *lays an obligation upon a Man to do whatever he has sworn,* yet if a Man swears to do any thing which is a sin, and contrary to some former Obligation, under which he indispensably lyes to God or Man, *he can not in this case be obliged to keep his Oath,* but is bound to repent of it. For, besides that it is not reasonable, that any mans own act should free him from any Obligation under which he lyes to another ; it is plain, that an Oath can neither alter the nature of a sin, nor make it lawful to commit it. And since the design of an Oath in its own nature is

Part III. Religion. 129

is to oblige him to performance that takes it ; and since the Name of God ought never unnecessarily to be invoked ; it follows, that *where a Man ought not to keep an Oath, he ought, not on any account to take it.*

15 According to the Customs of different places, there have divers Ceremonies and Forms of words been introduced in the taking of an Oath ; some of them grounded upon Reason, and others taken up through mistake in imitation. Thus, probably, whereas it may have been a Custom in some places in an Oath to invoke the Vengeance of God upon ones *head* ; from hence, likely, might arise

that Form of swearing by the Head ; and, in imitation thereof, by the Hand, or other parts of the Body. And whereas it was usual to take solemn Oaths, in extraordinary cases, in the Temple, or at the Altar, and, with us at this time, laying the Hand upon the Holy Scriptures; from hence might arise the Forms of swearing by the Temple, the Altar, the Bible, &c. But here it must be noted, that the nature of an Oath being for assurance, and consisting therefore altogether in the intention of the parties, *viz.* as well of him who requires it, as of him who gives it ; *He may be said really and truly to swear, not only who*  
makes



makes use of such a Form and Ceremony as is accustomed or prescribed in any certain place, but he *who any ways signifies to another an intention to oblige himself under the penalty of God's Wrath and Vengeance:* And for the same reason *the joint intention of both parties, as it appears fairly to be signified ( without any place for Fraud or Collusion ) must needs be the true measure of the obligation of every Oath.*

16. When a Man promises a thing, and obliges himself thereto, not to any other Man, but only to God alone; this is what is commonly called a *Vow*; and, comes so exactly under the same Rules with a *Promisory Oath* ( as will presently

## 132 A Gentleman's

sently appear to whosoever reads the two foregoing Sections) that I need not again particularly repeat them. But it is a very necessary caution to be observed in all Oaths, and more especially to be taken care of in Vows; that *a Man should never voluntarily oblige himself to any thing but what he is well assured is within his power to perform*; I mean with the help of that common Assistance and Grace which God has promised to all that seek it. For if a Man goes beyond this, and tyes such Burdens upon himself as he is not sufficiently sure of strength to bear; besides the presumption of the thing, it must needs involve his

his Conscience in many Difficulties and Perplexities.

17. Since there is no other Being whatsoever, which for Power, Goodness, or excellency of Nature can any way be equalled to, or compared with, Almighty God; from hence it will follow, that all *these foregoing Duties, which we owe unto God* on the account and supposition of the Transcendency of his Nature and Attributes, *are not any of them to be paid unto any Thing or Person besides himself.* For that would be in effect to set up somewhat else as a God, or in the place of God, unto ourselves. Let them then who seem either to love, or fear, or trust in, any Thing or Person

Person as much or more than God; and who offer up their Prayers and Devotions unto any Saints or Angels; which seems to suppose their Omniscience, and that they know the Secrets of Mens Hearts; and to argue some distrust of God's Goodness and Readiness to hear us; Let them, I say, and such like persons, consider well with themselves, how, they can answer these things to God, who is a jealous God. But since every *Man*, who is sincere in Religion, *must necessarily suit his Worship and Duty to God according to the apprehensions which he has of the Deity*; He who is convinced of the distinction of

of Persons in the Unity of the God-head ( of which I have endeavoured to give my Thoughts Part 2. §. 22. ) *cannot, I think, but make the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, the joynt Objects of his Service and Devotion.* And why it should not be both lawful and proper to invoke the Son and Holy Ghost, together with the Father, in our Prayers, as well as to be Baptized, and to Bless, in their Names, together with him ( which are both I think acts of Divine Worship ) I confess I can see no sound reason that can be given. But if any man shall tell me, that, in the Worship of God, he dares proceed no farther than the Holy Scriptures

136 A Gentleman's

Scriptures will expressly warrant, and therefore that he can not invoke the Holy Ghost in his Prayers, because he there finds neither Precept for, nor Example of it ( Judging no Man, but leaving every Man to stand or fall to his own Master ) for my self I answer, that since God has made us reasonable Creatures, I can not but think that a clear, and rational Consequence from Scripture is as good a Warrant for any religious action, and lays as great an Obligation upon him that is convinced of it, as the most express Text : And if the Personality and Divinity of the Holy Ghost be admitted ( as I here suppose ) to me, no  
 Confe-

Part III. Religion. 137

Consequence seems to be clearer than that he is to be invoked and worshiped, together with the Father and the Son.

18. Since the end to which God designs all Men, is eternal Happiness in another life ; Part 2. §. 29. To a capacity for which we are again, after our Fall, restored by Jesus Christ, Part 2. §. 33, &c. It follows, that *we ought not to do any thing whereby we may miss of this end, or be diverted from the prosecution of it ; But on the contrary, that the whole course of our actions and endeavours should ever be bent on the pursuit of it.*

19. No Man will ever be diligent in the pursuit of any thing

138 A Gentleman's

thing of which he seldom thinks, and rarely considers the benefit of obtaining, and the evil of missing it. If therefore we are obliged to be diligent in our endeavours after eternal Happiness; *we ought to make the Joys of Heaven and the Torments of Hell the subject of our frequent Thoughts and Meditations.*

20. He who places his Happiness, or any part of it, upon a wrong Object, will never be so diligent as he ought in the pursuit of that true Happiness, to which he is designed by God ; because the stream of his Thoughts and Endeavours must needs, in the whole, or in part, be diverted, according as he apprehends



prehends his Happiness to lie another way. Now that there is nothing in this World (except a good Conscience, and the hope of eternal Life, which, tho they may be had in this World, yet are not of the World) that can any way make up a part of our real Happiness, is abundantly demonstrable from the vanity, uncertainty and shortness of all worldly Joys. He therefore who places any part of his Happiness upon any thing belonging to this World, most certainly, places it upon a wrong Object. But whatsoever a Man proposes to himself as the ultimate End of any of his actions, it is certain that, therein he places some part,

140 A Gentleman's

part, at least, of his Happiness: For that which is the ultimate End of any action of a Man, must be proposed as the final satisfaction of some of his Desires (for as far as any one's Desire extends, so far off must be the End he aims at) and no Desire of any Man can ever be finally satisfied, till it meets with that wherein he supposes his Happiness (in whole or in part) to consist. From hence then it will follow, that altho there are some Pleasures and Satisfaction in this World, which may innocently be enjoyed, yet *No man ought to propose any worldly enjoyment as the ultimate End and Design of any of his Actions.* For this would  
be

be a placing his Happiness, or some part of it, upon a wrong Object, and thereby a hinderance of his pursuit of the true Happiness for which God designs him. To illustrate this, which otherwise may seem obscure, by an Example or two. A Man may lawfully, without doubt, relish the Meat he eats ( for to what other end did God give us the Sense of Tasting ) but the reason of his eating, at all times, ought to be to preserve his Life and Health, that he may be the better able to do all those things which God requires from him in order to his Salvation ; this being the End for which God designs him, and which he therefore ought

know

ought always to pursue. But he who in eating designs no more than to gratifie his sensual Appetite, or to pamper his Body that he may have the greater enjoyment of the rest of the Pleasures of this World; acts below, or rather contrary to, the End he is designed for; and may justly be compared to the Beasts that perish. Thus also a Man may innocently be pleased to have the Garment he wears, decent and comely, because the Eye is naturally gratified with the beauty of any Object: But if a Man wears Cloths which are more fine and costly than some others, his reason ought to be that he may not (according to the humour of the world

world ) be contemned for the Meaness or Sordidness of his Apparel ; but endeavour, by all fair ways, to preserve such a Respect among Men ( who are very apt to judge by the outward appearance ) as may enable him to do the more good in the world : But he who cloths himself like the Lillies of the Field, or *Salomon* in all his Glory, only that he may admire himself, or be taken notice of by others, for his remarkable Finery, is a vain person, and acts as foolishly as the Crow in the Fable, who clad himself in the Peacocks Feathers. And what I have here said concerning Food and Raiment, may also be applied to Riches and Honour,

144 A Gentleman's

Honour, and to all Pleasures, which are not absolutely unlawful ; and to every thing which Men aim at, or value in this World ; which they may lawfully seek after and take delight in, as far as they may be Instruments of doing Good, or are consistent with their Christian Duty ; but they must not place their Happiness, or any part of it, in them ; for that would make them forgetful of Heaven, and necessarily involve them in the sins of Ambition, Covetousness, Voluptuousness, &c.

21. As we are obliged to do whatsoever God commands, and patiently to suffer whatsoever he, in his Providence, shall

Part III. Religion. 145

shall think fit to lay or inflict upon us; so, for the same reasons, are we certainly bound to continue in this both doing and patiently suffering, until such time as he shall be pleased, of his own Will, to free and dismiss us from it. From whence it follows, that *no man ought, upon any account, to lay violent hands upon himself, or voluntarily contribute to the shortning of his own Life,* because he knows not but that God might be willing to exercise him yet farther, with Sufferings or other tryals, to his Glory, and the good of his own Soul. Nor ought any Servant, without leave or licence, to withdraw himself from the Service of his Master.

H

ster. And the same reason which forbids us to destroy our Lives, should also keep us from putting them to any unreasonable or unnecessary hazard.

22. He who in Duty is obliged to any thing, lies also, of necessity, under an Obligation to qualifie himself as well as he can, and to seek after, and make use of all such Means and Instruments as are necessary for the better executing and compassing that same thing to which he is so obliged. Since then *Health of Body, Knowledge and Understanding, and a competency of Riches, Power and Authority,* are necessary Qualifications and Instruments for the better perform-



performance of many of those Duties, to which we stand obliged by God's Law; it follows, that these are things which every man, according to his capacity, ought to seek and endeavour after. But we must not strive nor seek for any of these things by Ways or Means that are unlawful and wicked; for that would be, beforehand, to destroy and frustrate the very End and Design, for which alone they are to be sought and desired: namely Virtue, Piety and the Service of God. 01-1390 1390

23. On the other side; Whatsoever is an impediment or obstacle to the performance of any necessary Duty, we are bound, as far as we are  
 able,

able, to suppress or remove it out of the way. Now our Reason being that which first leads us to the Knowledge of Religion, and always enables us rightly to understand and judge of our Duty: And since all violent Passions, and over-eager Affections, do disturb our Reason, and very much hinder the free use and exercise of it: It follows, that we ought always to govern our Passions, and restrain all our Affections, as that they may be wholly subservient to, and never over-rule or mislead, our Reason.

Since God is the Creator, and therefore also the absolute Lord of all things; every thing certainly ought

by us to be always put and applied to that very same end and use (and no other) for which it was intended by him; as far as we have any intimation of his design, either from Reason or Revelation. Hence then it will follow, that those Creatures which God has given us to feed, sustain and keep us in health; that we may be the better able to do our Duty, and labour in our several Callings, ought not at any time (much less ordinarily) to be used to Excess, so as to impair our Health, or discompose our Reason, or any way hinder us in the performance of any Duty: And that Faculty of Generation, which

God has endowed us with, in order to the propagation of Mankind, ought not to be abused for the sake of filthy sensual Pleasure. Nor ought that plenty of Creatures, which God has bestowed upon us for the service of all Men, without exception, to be engrossed into the hands of any certain Men, so as that others should want the Necessaries of Life, whilst they abound in Superfluities. By which it appears, that Gluttony and Drunkenness, Lust and Covetousness are sins, and always to be avoided; and therefore, on the contrary, that Temperance, Chastity, Charity, and Liberality are Duties, and always to be practised.

25. Experience assures us, that the Spirit of Man is of an active nature; and, rather than be altogether idle, will be apt to employ its self in that which is evil. Nor does a man ever lie more open to Temptation than when he has nothing at all to do. We therefore ~~that would keep him-~~  
~~self innocent, must be careful al-~~  
~~ways to avoid Idleness.~~ For besides that Idleness would prove a Snare to us; It is a shame and a sin. When there is so much of God's work to be done in the world (for the promoting of his Glory and the Publick good of Mankind) that any man, who pretends to be his Servant, should stand still, and not put his

helping hand to the carrying of it on. But as we cannot say that a Man is idle, when he lies down to sleep; that, being thereby refreshed, he may be the better able again to labour; so must we by no means pass that Censure on him, who now and then spends some small portion of his Time in some pleasant and innocent Recreation; that, having his Thoughts hereby a little relaxed and diverted, he may be the fitter to return to Business of moment and consequence. But as for those persons, whose whole life almost is nothing else but Diversion; and who scarce ever set themselves to any employment, whereby either God is glorified,

glorified, or others benefited; what can they expect but the same Sentence, which is pronounced upon the idle and unprofitable Servant, Mat. 25. 26. And if, to be altogether idle and unemployed is not to be excused or justified; how much more are they to be condemned who are so frequently employed in such things as are evil and scandalous? Since the right knowledge of our Duty arises chiefly from a true judgment concerning the circumstances and qualifications of Things and Persons, it follows, that every Man should endeavour, as far as he is able, to inform himself rightly; and to frame true Notions, in all points, of and

154 A Gentleman's III  
concerning God, Himself, and o-  
ther Men; to whom there are  
Duties owing, and also of all  
those things which are the sub-  
jects of any of those Duties,  
and in the true management  
whereof, such Duties do con-  
sist. For if he be mistaken in  
his Judgment concerning ei-  
ther of these, he must of ne-  
cessity take wrong Measures  
in his actions. Thus, for  
Example, if a Man should not  
believe God to be eternal,  
most good, wise and power-  
ful, &c. it would not be pos-  
sible for him to love, honour  
and fear him in that degree  
that he ought to do. And if  
we do not always remember  
ourselves to be frail Creatures,  
subject to Passions and In-  
firmities



firmities, of short continuance in this World, and that, whatever Excellency we may seem to have, we derive it wholly from God and his Providence, and not from ourselves; we shall never be able so effectually as we ought, to govern our Passions, and restrain our Affections from the things of this World, and pursue that End for which God has designed us. And if we do not consider that other Men (whatever accidental Differences there may be between us) are equal to us in nature, that their Souls are as precious in God's sight as ours, that Christ died for them, as much as for us. *Or.* We shall not be inclined to be  
have

256 A Gentleman's

have ourselves to them with  
the Justice, Charity and Hu-  
mility which do evidently ap-  
pear to be our Duty. And,  
lastly, if we do not frame a  
true Notion of the Vanity of  
the things of this World, and  
the Excellency of the Joys of  
Heaven; we shall never be  
able to prefer the later before  
the former, in such a measure  
as we ought to do.

27. Altho the chief Happi-  
ness of Mankind is reserved by  
God to be enjoyed in another  
life, by those who heartily  
strive for it whilst they are  
in this; yet can I find no rea-  
son to think that he has de-  
creed us all, or any of us, to  
be absolutely miserable whilst  
we remain in this World. On  
the

the contrary, since God has originally a love for all Mankind in general, Part 2. § 16. I cannot but conclude, that he always (even in this life) designs at least some share or beginning of Happiness for every Man; and never afflicts, or suffers any Man to be afflicted, but only in order to his greater Happiness hereafter; until such time as he thinks it proper to pour out his Vengeance and final Destruction upon such as have by their Wickedness altogether forfeited his Love and Favour. Since then God originally designs some measure or commencement of Happiness to all Men, even in this life, as well as eternal Happiness

ness hereafter; it follows, that we (who ought as much as we can to be subservient to all God's Designs) should endeavour as much as in us lies, to promote the Happiness of every Man, both in relation to this World, and of that which is to come. Or in other terms, that every Man should endeavour to do as much good to all others as he can, and hurt no man whatsoever, if he can avoid it.

28. But if every Man always kept singly by himself, without any Society or Intercourse with others; it would be impossible to do any good one to another: And therefore I conclude, that it is the Will of God that Mankind should

*should live each with others in a state of Society.* And to make us all the more sensible of the necessity and obligation that lies upon us thus to live with, and do good to others, God has so ordered the state and condition of all Mankind, that it is not possible for any Man long to subsist, much less to enjoy any sort of Comfort or satisfaction in this Life, without the good will and assistance of others; which he has no reason to expect, except he be ready upon all occasions to retaliate what he himself so continually stands in need of. And since God's original Love to Mankind is not confined to some certain persons, but universally extended

tended to all; I must needs conclude, that he designs not only the Comfort and Happiness of some particulars; but universally of all Men whatsoever. And since the more universal the Society between Man is, the more universal the Happiness which thence results will be; it will evidently follow, that it is God's Will, that every Man should behave himself after a sociable and friendly manner, to every other Man, without exception. And since there is no Man in the World, however weak and poor, or at never so great a distance from me, but it is possible that things may fall out so as that, one time or other, I may, in my  
Distress,

Part III. Religion 109

Distress, stand in need of his Help and Friendship, my Reason tells me, that it is my Interest, as well as Duty, as much as I am able, beforehand to oblige every Man who comes in my way, by doing Offices of Civility and Kindness to him, as occasion offers.

29. That God has given to Mankind in general the free Liberty to make use of all other Creatures for their support and sustenance, my Reason, as well as the Holy Scripture, does assure me; because without some of them we could not preserve our selves in being; and if we had not liberty to destroy others of them for our use, they would  
in

162 A Gentleman's III 1169  
in time so over-spread the  
Face of the Earth, as that we  
could not have any safe or con-  
venient Habitation upon it.  
But if all these Creatures were  
always to remain in common;  
for that no Man should have  
a Right to take possession of  
any part of them to his own  
particular use and disposal;  
and to exclude others there-  
from; the Consequence must  
needs be perpetual Discord  
and Confusion. For when I  
had prepared Food to sustain  
my Hunger, or Rayment to  
defend me from the Cold; if  
every other Man should have  
still as good a Right thereto  
as I, any one might lawfully  
take it away from me; and  
if my Right were as good as  
any



any others, I might also lawfully Defend my Possession; from which state of things Contention and Strife must eternally and unavoidably arise. I therefore conclude, that there must be some Laws of Property and Right; and that every man must yield to it, *that which is their own*, or else there can be no such thing as Society and Beneficence preserved and kept up amongst Mankind. Now in order to discover these same Laws of Right and Property, whereby every man is to know what is truly his own, I lay down this general Rule, as a thing most reasonable. That, Whereas originally every Mans Right and Title to every

every thing may be esteemed equal (God having given us all the Creatures in common, and not, by any act of his, divided to each Man his several Property) If there be any apparent, or but probable, ground why such or such a particular thing should be the Property of one Man rather than of another, that ought so to determine the matter as to oblige all other Men quietly to yield and suffer him to enjoy and use that same thing, whatever it be, as his own. For where the Ballance stands exactly even, a small matter is enough to turn the Scale to one side. Now in these following Cases there seems to be great Reason

Reason for determining a Property in a thing to particular persons, viz. 1. When a Man is the first that takes actual Possession of a thing, and converts it to his own use. For such a Possession is an addition to his general Right beyond what any other Man, who never was in Possession, can pretend. And why should I part with my Possession to any other, or he demand it from me, except he were able to make out a better Title than I to the thing in dispute?

2. When a Man takes Possession of a thing, which is actually rejected and deserted by him, who last had the Right to, and Possession of it. For his Case seems to be much the

the same with his who first takes Possession of a thing,

3. When a thing is given, or in Exchange made over, to another by him who had before a just Right thereto: for it is highly reasonable, that every Man should have liberty to dispose of his own,

4. When a Company of People do by an Agreement make a Partition of what was before in Common amongst them all, it is reasonable that every Man should acquiesce in that share which upon such a Division, shall fall to his Lot.

5. When a Man takes care and pains to produce and rear any thing for his own use or profit, it is reasonable that he (and not another Man against

his Consent) should enjoy the benefit of his own Labour. And lastly, where a Society of People do submit their Properties unto a legislative Power which is erected amongst them, it is reasonable that herein they should always be concluded and determined by the Laws of that Community, of which they are Members. And if there be any other Rules for determining the Rights of Men to particular things, it is most evident, that due care must be taken to keep and observe them, or else farewell all Order and Society.

30. Where Fidelity is wanting, Society cannot be truly kept and preserved. I therefore  
fore

fore conclude, that every man is obliged faithfully to perform whatever he Promises; except the person to whom the Promise is made, do freely acquit and discharge him from it. But if a Man promises to do a thing which is sinful, he ought not to keep such a Promise as that; as I have already shewn in the Case of an Oath.

31. And the same Reasons which oblige us to hurt no Man, to yield to every Man his Right, and to keep our Promises; do plainly shew, that he who wrongfully hurts another, or deprives him of his Right, or breaks his Promise made to him, ought, as far as he is able, to make full Restitu-

tion

tion and Satisfaction to the per-  
 son whom he has thus injured.  
 For he that makes a Breach  
 in humane Society, is doubt-  
 less obliged, as far as he can, to  
 repair it. Where a Proposition is  
 literally false, and yet spoken  
 with no manner of intention to  
 deceive another, it is not to be  
 called a Lye: But he who as-  
 serts any thing for a Truth,  
 with an intent to make ano-  
 ther believe it, which is, or  
 for ought he knows may be,  
 false, he only is to be esteem-  
 ed a Liar. Now some have  
 doubted, whether the sin of a  
 Lye consists in the bare Un-  
 truth, or only in the Injustice  
 of it; and from thence have  
 been inclined to believe, that  
 I such

170 A Gentleman's  
 such a Lye as does no hurt to  
 any one, nor draws any man-  
 ner of evil consequence after  
 it, is not to be looked on as a  
 sin; and so much the less, if  
 it be told with a real design  
 only to do Good, or prevent  
 Mischief. The Niceties of this  
 Controversy I leave to be dis-  
 cussed by others. But since  
 humane Society cannot be up-  
 held without, in many cases,  
 a dependence upon one ano-  
 thers Veracity; I may surely  
 venture thus far to conclude;  
*viz.* That, not only such a Lye  
 as tends to the damage of ano-  
 ther; but also such a Lye, how-  
 ever otherwise innocent, and  
*giving occasion to no tendency* *Mans*  
*Truth suspected in other cases;* is  
 to be reputed unlawful; if for  
 doubt I no



no other Reason, yet at least  
 fore this, because it is injuri-  
 ous to humane Society. And  
 the same Reason will hold as  
 strongly against all mental Re-  
 servations and equivocal Ex-  
 pressions. For what is humane  
 Society at any time the betwixt  
 for the literal Truth of what  
 a Man says, if others who are  
 therein concerned, do not un-  
 derstand his true meaning by  
 the words which he speaks to  
 them. It is highly reasonable  
 that every Man should have  
 such an Esteem and Respect  
 shewed him, as may be pro-  
 portionable to his Virtues and  
 good Qualities. And as it is  
 proper enough for a Man, by  
 lawful ways, to assert his own

Reputation whenever it is unjustly aspersed; so he ought to take especial care in the management of all his Words and Actions, that he may not seem to exalt or magnifie himself, or to despise or undervalue others beyond what is not only just and true, but also necessary, either for the bringing about something that is good, or the preventing something that is evil. For there is scarce any thing that gives greater disgust, or helps to render a Man more odious to the World, than an over-forwardness to praise and magnifie himself, and to undervalue others, if he be not necessitated thereto by some very just Reason: And on the

the contrary, there is scarce any thing which reconciles a Man more to the Favour and Good Will of People, than when he is not over apt to ascribe much to himself, but is ready to give the utmost Honour and Respect to all others that in reason can be thought due. I conclude therefore, that *Pride is a Sin, and Humility a Duty*, because the former tends to disturb, but the latter strengthens and confirms humane Society.

34. What is incumbent upon him to do, who has done wrong to another, I have just now shewn: But if another Man wrongs, or any way endeavours to Injure me; As it is lawful for me (so for

174 . A Gentleman's  
every Man) to stand upon  
my defence, and use my ut-  
most endeavours to save my  
self from Wrong, or recover  
that which is my Right; (for  
otherwise all the good and  
honest Men in the World  
would continually lie exposed  
to the Wrongs and Insults of  
any evil Man, who might  
have a mind to destroy them)  
to I, and every Man ought to  
be ready at any time to be re-  
conciled to an Adversary or En-  
emy; provided it may be upon  
such terms as are consistent  
with our own Safety: Nor  
ought any Man upon any oc-  
casion to do any greater harm to  
his keenest Enemy, than what he  
apprehends to be absolutely neces-  
sary to his own preservation.  
For

For since Society and Peace among Mankind is the Will and design of Almighty God; If a breach be made therein by another, I ought for my part to do nothing which may make it wider; but ever to be ready to give a helping hand to the closing and making up of it.

Hitherto I have endeavoured to lay down the main and fundamental Rules of that Duty, which Every Man is obliged to pay and perform to God, to Himself, and to all other Men. Now to deduce all the particular branches of Virtue and Piety from these main Principles; and to shew how Morality is improved and refined by the Gospel to

the highest degree of perfection, is a thing not difficult to be done, but yet inconsistent with my designed Brevity: For which therefore I must refer my Reader to some of those Books of Christian Piety, wherein each Particular of our Duty is, at large, described and pressed. But in the mean time if we would have a shorter Abstract of our Duty than what I have now been giving, The Holy Scripture furnishes us with three Rules (two exprest, and one implied) from which every thing that we can be obliged to do, is easily deduced. And they are, 1. That we should love God with all our Hearts Soul and Strength. 2. That we should

Part III. Religion. 177

*should truly love our Selves, that is to say, so as always to aim at and pursue our true and chief Happiness: And 3. That we should love others as we do our Selves: Not with the same degree of Love; for that is not only unreasonable, but impossible; but with the same Reality and Sincerity; or, in other terms, that we should ever do unto all other Men what we would think reasonable that they should do unto us, if we were in their Circumstances and they in ours. But besides these general Duties, which are indiscriminately incumbent upon all Men; there are divers particular ones, which do arise from those several Relations which*

I 5 Men

178 A Gentleman's

Men may contract and bear to others, of which it is fit that I give some brief Account.

36. That God would have the Generation of Men continued and increased upon the Earth, is very evident; as well from the natural inclination which he has implanted in them (as in all other living Creatures) to propagate their Kind; as from that Love and Affection which is common to them with other Creatures towards those who spring from them. But if Mankind were propagated only by the exercise of wild and wandering Lust, without confinement to any settled Rules or Laws; this would bring



bring in such a Deluge of Confusion and disturbance, as would unavoidably deprive them of the greatest part of those satisfactions which at the present they do, or may, enjoy. For if there were no such thing as settled Marriages, we can hardly suppose that ever there would be any sort of settled Families; which are the first beginnings of Society and regularity amongst Men; Fathers would not know which were their own Children, and consequently would take no care to bring them up, or provide for them, and not only the pain of bearing, but the whole trouble of nourishing, rearing and providing for Children, would

180 A Gentleman's  
lie wholly upon the Female  
Sex, who by themselves could  
but very imperfectly perform  
that work as it should be  
done. Since therefore God in-  
tends the Comfort and satis-  
faction of Men, even whilst  
they are here upon Earth, I  
conclude, that it is his Will,  
that *Mankind should be propa-  
gated no other way but by settled  
Marriages*; that is, by a Com-  
pact and Agreement between  
the Male and Female, and  
that under such Rules as are  
fit and proper to promote the  
general Happiness of Man-  
kind, which being his great  
design, ought ever also to be  
ours.

37. That a Woman should  
have more than one Husband

at a time, is notoriously contrary to the design of Marriage, and therefore directly unlawful. And that a Man should have more than one Wife, at a time, the experience of many, in former Ages; and at this time, in the Eastern Countries, does sufficiently testify to be contrary to that peace and quietness which is necessary to the Comfort and Happiness of every Family; and therefore not so agreeable to that universal Friendship which ought ever to be preserved amongst Men; but especially among those who are so nearly ally'd together. Moreover, if Men and their Wives should have liberty to part one from the other,

other, whenever they please  
 (besides the Confusion and  
 disturbance which this also  
 must breed in Families, espe-  
 cially where there are Chil-  
 dren in the case) Marriage  
 would hardly differ from that  
 wild and wandering Lust, a-  
 gainst which I have spoken in  
 the preceding Paragraph. I  
 conclude therefore, that all  
 this, before the coming of  
 Christ, if a Man took more  
 Wives than one; not for Lust  
 (which is unlawful) but  
 merely for Propagation;  
 it might in some cases be dis-  
 posed with, yet it is ever was  
 most pleasing to God, that a  
 Man should have but one  
 Wife at a time; and that no-  
 thing but Death should ever

Part III. Religion. 183

part a Man and his Wife; except the evil Behaviour of one party should make the continuance of the Marriage Compact and Cohabitation, not only something uneasy (for that for peace and quietness sake should be born patiently) but down-right intolerable. But these things which Reason may perhaps but imperfectly suggest, the Gospel has passed and established into Laws; viz. that, as every Woman is to have but one Husband, so no Man must have more than one Wife at a time; nor must any thing part Man and Wife but Death, except it be the case of Adultery. And better, much it is, that particular persons should sometimes

184 A Gentleman's  
times be forced to labour  
under some Inconvenience,  
than that any such Liberty  
should be allowed as tends  
to disturb and distract the  
World.

38. We generally find, that  
all Men, even Heathens as  
well as Jews and Christians,  
have conceived a more than  
ordinary abhorrence against  
the Marriage of such persons  
as were very nearly Allied  
together within some certain  
Degrees of Relation. And  
since the World is wide e-  
nough for a Man to chuse a  
Wife, or a Woman a Hus-  
band; those general Rules  
which are given to us, in  
Scripture, of providing for  
things honest, not only in the  
sight

sight of God, but of Men also; and of taking care, not only about such things as are just and honest, but also about such as are lovely and of good report; should teach us that no person should engage in such a Marriage as is by wise men commonly reputed to be incestuous and unlawful.

39. Since the relation of Husband and Wife, is wholly owing to the mutual Compact and Agreement which is made between them at their Marriage; the Duties which result from that Relation can be no other but the faithful keeping and observing of that same Compact and Agreement, the Conditions of which, may be more or fewer according as

there

the

the parties shall think convenient. But these are always necessary, and must never be wanting; *viz.* that the Husband and Wife must sincerely love each other, must be perfectly faithful to each others (without which, mutual Love can never be preserved in tire) and Christianity expressly adds, what Reason perhaps does also obscurely suggest, that the Wife must be subject and obedient to her Husband.

40. When Children are begotten and brought forth into the World, it is not reasonable, nor agreeable to God's design, that they should perish and dye for want of care to be taken of them. Nor are there



Part III. Religion. 187

there any Persons upon whom a greater obligation can lye to bring up Children, than upon those who begat them, and were the cause of their being: And since God intends not the Misery and Affliction; but generally the Comfort and satisfaction of Mankind upon Earth, as well as their Happiness hereafter in Heaven, I conclude, that it is ever the Duty of Parents to take the best care they can to bring up their Children, and to promote their true Happiness, both in this World, and that which is to come. For which reason we must needs suppose them to be vested with a lawful Power of governing and chastising them, as far as is necessary to keep

keep them in good and regular order.

41. And on the other side, since *Children* are beholding to their Parents, even for their very Being, whereby they are capacitated, not only for the enjoyment of the Satisfaction of this Life, but also for eternal Happiness in the World to come; it is highly reasonable, that they *should love their Parents with a very high degree of Affection*; and should always be ready to make them the best returns of Duty and Service that they can. And according as Parents have been careful in bringing up and making Provision for their Children, so the Childrens Love and Affection ought

still

still more and more to be returned and expressed towards them.

42. Where Parents, by Death or otherwise, are rendered incapable of nourishing and breeding up a Child; or where they utterly forsake and expose him to the wide World, before he is able to provide for, or take care of himself; If another person takes him, and maintains and puts him in a way of living, such a Child is in all reason obliged to pay a proportionable share of filial Love and Duty to him who has performed the part of a Parent to him.

43. It is not pretended, that ever any Person or Family, by name, were ever, by

by God's particular and revealed Appointment, invested with the Power of governing over such or such a certain People; excepting only the case of the People of *Israel*; I therefore conclude, that how-  
*ever the Magistracy which is lawfully established throughout the World, is ordained of God; it is not by immediate Revelation from Heaven.*

§ 44. Whether a Parent by the Law of Nature has the Power of a supreme Magistrate over his own Children, is not necessary here to enquire. But I see no ground in Reason or Nature, to judge that the eldest Son of any Kindred successively should have the same Power over his Brothers

thers and Sisters (who are no way beholding to him for their Being, nor, it may be, for their well-being) and much less over his Fathers Brothers and Sisters; as the common Parent of a whole Family may have over all that spring from him. yd conclude therefore, that *lawful Magistracy* is not to be derived by the Law of Nature from the alone right of Primogeniture. Nor do we ever meet with any Prince in History, who derived his Authority from this only Fountain; and if this were the true Right and Title of Magistracy, it would follow, that all the World ought to be but one Monarchy; and *our* Heir Male the Emperour

perour thereof; and all the Kings and Emperours that ever were, whose Titles were originally bottom'd upon another Foundation, were no better than meer Usurpers.

45. Where one Man conquers another: that is to say, by force of Arms, or by Stratagem, gets him so into his Power, as that he can destroy or kill him at his pleasure; the conquered person indeed, being obliged to do all that honestly he can for the preservation of his own Life; ought, on that account, to use his best Endeavours by an obsequious Demeanour to assuage and pacifie the Fury of the Conquerour. But no farther than he finds necessary to

his own Preservation, he is not obliged to obey the Conquerour; except he binds himself thereto by some act of his own; there being no Law of God or Nature which lays any farther Obligation on him in that case, but only to preserve himself, without doing wrong to another. Since then all the World does allow that a Subject is bound to obey the Magistrate, who is lawfully set over him, even in those cases where no danger, in this world, would attend his Disobedience, or, as the Apostle expresses it, *not only for Wrath, but also for Conscience sake.* It will follow, that Conquest alone, without any Compact or Agreement, does not

K

*establisb*

*establiſh the Conquerour a lawful Magiſtrate over the conquered People.* For if it did, there could be no difference between a Liege Subject, and a Prisoner of War.

46. If any man unjustly invades the Property, or attempts the Life of another, It is lawful for him, to whom the Wrong is offered, to defend himself the best he can; And if he has no other way of securing himself, nor can prevail with his Enemy to desist from his evil Design, the necessity of preserving himself from Death, or (which may be as bad, or worse) from Ruin, will certainly justify the Killing of him. For otherwise the Lives and Fortunes



tunes of all honest Men must for ever be exposed to the arbitrary pleasure of every lawless and wicked person, which is contrary to that comfort and satisfactory state, which we suppose God generally to design for Men, even in this Life. And that which is allowable for every single Man to do for himself, is surely no less lawful for a Society of Men combining together, to do for their joynt and mutual Safety. Moreover, if in such a Society any person be taken in, or after, such an unlawful Attempt, it is lawful for them to punish him in such a manner (whether by death or otherwise) as may be necessary to terrifie

196 A Gentleman's

others from doing the like for the time to come: For without this, there could be no security against evil doers; who might contrive to act their Mischief so secretly, as not to be killed, or even resisted in the very fact it self. But if such a Society have not certain Laws and Rules to proceed by in all such cases, and some certain persons to put those Laws in execution; every Man would take upon him to be his own Judge; and what might seem fit and reasonable to one, might appear otherwise to another of a contrary interest, from whence perpetual Factions and Confusion must needs follow. But there is no reason that

that any one, or more of such a Society, without the consent of the rest, should take upon them to make Laws for, or exercise Authority over the whole Community. For if it were in every Mans power to make himself a Magistrate, all might set up to be Rulers, and few or none would be Subjects; which would bring in Confusion, and destroy the Society. But when the whole Society do agree and consent, that such certain persons shall have the exercising of such certain Powers (which originally are in the Body of the Society it self) it is then lawful for those persons to act accordingly; and they who have consented to their Authority

are, by virtue of that Consent, obliged to pay Obedience to them. I conclude therefore, that *the Original of Magistrates is from the Consent of the People*, since there is no other solid ground, that I can find, upon which to establish them. *And when once a legislative and executive Power is thus settled and established by the consent of a People, who acquiesce in it, and upon all occasions take shelter under its Protection; it is to be looked upon as ratified and confirmed by God's own appointment; and Subjection and Obedience is accordingly to be paid to it by every particular person who abides within the precincts of its Jurisdiction. For this was the*  
very

very case of the Roman Government, which was in St. Paul's time; and there is exactly the same reason for it in all other Kingdoms and Commonwealths whatsoever.

47. Since then Magistracy derives it self wholly from the Consent of the People; from hence it will follow, that *the Original Rule of the Magistrates Power and the Subjects obedience, is that Consent which the People has given; or, in other terms, those Laws and Constitutions of the place, in which the Body of the Nation have acquiesced: Beyond which neither any Magistrate ought to command, nor is any Subject bound to obey. For where there is no Law, there*

can be no Transgression, nor any Obligation to Obedience; nor consequently any Right to Command.

48. But if the Legislative Power of any Nation do enact any thing which is contrary to the express Law of God, or the eternal Laws of good and evil; No particular Man can be bound to obey such a Constitution. For the Authority of God ought to weigh more with us, than that of any Community whatsoever; And it is expressly ruled in Scripture, that we ought to obey God rather than Man.

49. And the same Reason (*viz.* Self-preservation) which allows a Society, thus settled into a Government, to pu-

nish

Pa  
nif  
felv  
if b  
fen  
fore  
wre  
end  
Rig  
tak  
to  
it  
mu  
ma  
Dis  
wh  
me  
fed  
of  
affa  
con  
whe  
in  
cus

nish Malefactors within themselves; must also justifie them, if by force of Arms they defend themselves against any foreign Enemy, which would wrong or oppress them; or endeavour to recover their Right from those who have taken it from them, and refuse to restore it. For otherwise it were in vain for a Community to hope to subsist by maintaining good Order and Discipline at home; if all the while they must, without remedy, lye continually exposed to the Wrongs and Insults of every Enemy which may assault them from abroad. I conclude therefore, that *War*, whether defensive or offensive, may in many cases, be very just and

*lawful*: Nor is there the least word throughout the Holy Scriptures, which may represent the Profession of a *Soldier*, who fights under a lawful Authority, as any way contrary to Religion and a good Conscience: Tho such a Man certainly ought not only to exercise his calling with as much Mildness and Humanity as can be consistent with the service of his Country; but also ever to satisfy himself first of the lawfulness of the Cause in which he engages, before he draws his Sword in the Quarrel: For as we are obliged to do no hurt to any Man whatsoever, if we can avoid it; so, for the very same reason, ought we not to become instrumental in  
any



any Wrong or Injustice which  
 another Man let him be  
 who he will ) intends to do.  
 50. That an humble De-  
 meanour, together with a reason-  
 able Diligence, and an honest  
 Fidelity to his Master, is the  
 Duty of every Servant, is most  
 apparent; because if a Ser-  
 vant be either haughty, neg-  
 ligent, or unfaithful, he ceases  
 in effect to be a Servant. And  
 on the other side, that Justice  
 and Humanity are no less the  
 Duty of a Master towards his  
 Servant is altogether as clear,  
 because where these are not  
 observed, the Condition of a  
 Servant must be intolerable,  
 and contrary to that comfort-  
 able state which we suppose  
 God to design for all Men.  
 and

and therefore for Servants,  
who are as much Men, and  
as much valued by God, and  
for whom Christ died, as  
well as for their Masters.

§ 1. That all Christians are,  
or (according to Christs In-  
stitution) ought to be, combined  
together into one Society, which  
is called the Church, I have al-  
ready said Part 2. §. 40. Now  
in all such incorporated Socie-  
ties these three things are ever  
to be considered, 1. What is  
the Design of the person or  
persons, who first gather and  
institute them? 2. What Ad-  
vantage accrues to those who  
become Members of them?  
And 3. What are the Laws  
and Rules to be observed by  
the whole Body, and every

Member of it? The Design of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who, at the Will of his heavenly Father, instituted and embodied the Christian Church, was to purifie unto himself a peculiar People zealous of good works, or, in other terms, by this Incorporation so made, more effectually to promote the practice of Virtue and Godliness in the World. The benefit and advantage which every true Member of this Church may propose to himself, is the participation of God's Grace and assistance here for the better performance of his Duty, and the enjoyment of everlasting Happiness hereafter; both which are promised to us by  
God

God in and through Christ Jesus our Saviour. And lastly, the Laws of the Christian Church are either, 1. The general Laws of Piety and Morality, of which I have hitherto been giving an account: or, 2, Such particular Constitutions as are proper to it, considered as a congregated and incorporated Body of Men; which I have reserved to be treated of in the last place of all.

52. *The first thing which is incumbent on every Man, as (or rather, in order to become) a Member of the Christian Church, is to be baptized in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: Which Ceremony is intended to put us*

in

in mind of that Purity and Cleanness from sin to which we ought to bring our Souls by a virtuous and holy life : And altho to wet or wash the Body with Water, may seem but a slight and inconsiderable thing ; yet since our Saviour Christ has expressly appointed and commanded it, and since his Apostles were always most careful to perform it, insomuch that even they who had received the extraordinary Gift of the Holy Ghost from Heaven, were yet required to be Baptized, in order to become visible Members of the Church ; This Ceremony, I think, ought not to be left off, or discontinued. Altho whether it be per-

performed by dipping the Body under the Water, or by sprinkling the Water upon it, to me seems to be altogether indifferent; and to be regulated only by Prudence, or the Custom of particular places. For neither does the word *Baptize* signifie any more than to Wash; which may be done either way; nor does it appear that the Apostles dipped all those whom they baptized. Moreover, since sprinkling, as well as dipping, may sufficiently denote the washing and cleansing of the Soul from sin; and since Baptism is not expressly, in the Holy Scripture, determined to either of these ways, to the exclusion of the other; I conclude,

clude, that God has left the matter ( so far ) indifferent to us ; and to be ordered according to Prudence, as the Circumstances of things and persons shall at any time direct. And as long as the Substance and Design of his Command is carefully retained, I see no necessity of being so very solicitous about a Circumstance of it; except it could evidently be made appear, that he had appointed and determined it.

53. Since then Baptism is as the Entrance or Door of Admittance into the Church of Christ, it will follow, that all they, and they only who are duly qualified to be Members of his Church, are fit to have

have Baptism administred to them. If any person has been brought up out of the Church, until he comes to years of understanding and knowledge; he is then, and only then, qualified to be a Member of the Church, when, having repented of all his former sins, he believes and owns that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and consequently receives and professes that Faith and Doctrine which he has taught and authorized, and obliges himself to live according to all those Laws and Rules which he has prescribed to us; this being the very Condition which our Saviour indispensably requires from his Church, and every Member



Member of it, according as they are capable of performing it. But if a Child be born of Christian Parents, or is so in the hands of Christian Guardians, as that it is in their power to bring him up in the true Religion; and they do promise and engage so to educate him; such a Child as this, even before he comes to any knowledge of things, is yet qualified to be a Member of the Church of Christ (upon the presumption that he will perform what God requires from him when he comes to be capable of it) and so to continue, if, by Apostacy or wickedness, he does not, in process of time, separate himself again from

from it. For this, beyond dispute was the case of Infants, before the coming of Christ, who at eight days old (if Males) were to be Circumcised, and thereby admitted into the Church of God, and within his Covenant, if they were either the Sons, or Servants born in the House, of believing persons, and who, as well as their Parents, are expressly said to enter into Covenant with God, which is but another expression for becoming of his Church: And no one surely will offer to say, that the Case of Infants is made worse than it was, by our Saviours coming into the World; especially, since he

has

has expressly commanded, that little Children should come unto him, and not be forbidden; for that of such is the Kingdom, that is, the Church of God. I conclude therefore, that not only adult persons, who make a due profession of their Faith and Repentance; but also such Infants as are in a way of being brought up in the Christian Religion, are, without any Obstacle, to be admitted to Baptism.

§4. There are some passages in the New Testament, which seem plainly to suggest to us, that it was a constant Custom with the Apostles of Christ, to lay their Hands upon all such as had been Baptized (which laying on

on of Hands was undoubtedly accompanied with Prayer to God) in order to their receiving the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit of God: But that this was a thing positively prescribed, and commanded, I do not find clearly proved: And therefore, altho I dare not hastily condemn those particular Churches, where this same Custom is disused or intermitted; yet since the Grace and Assistance of the Holy Ghost, in order to the leading of a good life, and obtaining eternal Happiness, is for ever continued unto the Church, as I have said Part 2. §. 42. and therefore ought ever to be sought for (altho the working

Par  
in  
of  
lea  
am  
clu  
Ha  
bee  
Pra  
gro  
Gra  
cal  
den  
ver  
Chi  
wh  
ow  
no  
the  
cor  
of  
to  
ing

ing of Miracles and speaking of all Languages, without learning them, be ceased from amongst us,) I cannot but conclude, that the laying on of Hands upon persons that have been baptized, together with Prayer to God for their growth and continuance in Grace, which is commonly called *Confirmation*, is a prudent and godly Custom, and ever fit to be continued in the Church.

55. As every particular Man whatsoever is obliged, in his own private person, to honour and worship God; so the Church, being a Society incorporated for the better serving of God, is under an Obligation to do the same in her associated

ated capacity, that is, to say,  
*to assemble together for his wor-*  
*ship.* And because the whole  
Number of Christians, which  
are dispersed over the Face of  
the Earth, are not capable of  
meeting together in one place;  
the Universal Church there-  
fore lies under a necessity of  
subdividing it self into parti-  
cular Churches; and those a-  
gain into particular Congre-  
gations, according as they find  
to be most convenient for the  
pursuing that same end for  
which they are so incorpora-  
ted. Moreover, since all these  
particular Churches and Con-  
gregations are still, or ought  
to be, but Parts and Members  
of that One Catholick Church  
which our Saviour Christ has

appointed and founded, it follows, that none of them ought to constitute or act any thing amongst themselves; which may give a just occasion for the breaking of that Union and Concord which he designed, and has commanded always to be maintained amongst them. But on the contrary, Matters ought every where so to be ordered, as that if a Member of any one particular Church should travel into any other part of the World, he may meet with nothing in any Christian Congregation, where he comes, which justly should be a hindrance to him from assembling or communicating with it. the Instruction of the People

L

56. The

56. The particular acts to be performed in these Christian Assemblies, are all such as tend to the Edification of the People in Virtue and Godliness (which is the design of their Incorporation) and consequently, to the promoting of each mans eternal Salvation (which is the end that every Christian is supposed to pursue.) All which are reducible to these Two Heads, *viz.* Devotion towards God, which includes Confession of sins, Prayer for all things necessary, both for themselves and others, and Praising of God, as well for his own Excellency and Perfection, as for his Love and Beneficence to all Mankind: And 2. the Instruction of the People



People which are assembled; which is to be done by Reading and Explaining the Holy Scriptures, Catechizing, Preaching, &c. But there is one act of Devotion towards God to be performed in such publick Assemblies, which is commonly known by the name of the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, or the Holy Communion; of which it will be fit to say something more particularly, because it is an Ordinance altogether of positive Institution, as well as Baptism, of which I have already spoken.

As our Saviours Death and Passion, which he underwent for the sins of the whole World, should never want of

Gratitude; be remembered by us in the most emphatical and affecting manner; so except we have, every one of us, a share and interest in the Atonement which Christ thereby made to God for us, we cannot, by the Terms of the Gospel, hope for eternal salvation. In order then to both these Ends he himself before his Death appointed it, as a perpetual Ordinance, for ever to be continued in his Church; that Bread should be blessed, broken, and eaten, and the Cup also blessed, distributed and drunk, in such assemblies as should meet together in his Name, not only as a Remembrance of his Sufferings for us, which are thereby shown forth and represent-

red

ged; but also as the Communion, that is to say, the exhibition of his Body and Blood unto, and the participation of them, by all faithful and good Christians. To say with the Roman Church, that the Substance of Bread and Wine, being blessed or consecrated in this Ordinance, are transubstantiated or turned into the very, real Substance, of the Body and Blood of Christ, so as that that very same Body of his which was crucified, and that Blood which was shed, are wholly and intirely received into the bodily Mouth, and swallowed down by every Communicant, does not only draw after it such monstrous Absurdities, as no Man, I

202 A Gentleman's  
think, without renouncing  
my Reason, can digest, nor  
can be inferred from any pas-  
sage of Scripture interpreted  
according to the Rules which  
I have laid down, Part 1. §.  
24. and 33. But is also direct-  
ly contrary even to the Let-  
ter, as well as Meaning of the  
New Testament; in which  
the Bread, in this Holy Insti-  
tution, is plainly called Bread  
and by the same Rule the  
Wine must still remain Wine,  
as to its natural substance; e-  
ven after the Blessing or Con-  
secration of it. As therefore  
I must needs conclude, that  
the Body and Blood of Christ  
are not received by the Mem-  
bers of his Church after that  
manner, which they of Rome

do

do define; so must it also follow, that their Worshipping of the Host and pretended Sacrifice of Christ in the Mass, together with their depriving the Laity of the Cup (which besides other Absurdities do wholly depend upon the Doctrine of Transubstantiation) are none other than meer human and unlawful Inventions and practices. But since a Man may then be said truly to receive and partake of any thing, tho at never so great a distance from him, when he has a real Interest in it, and enjoys the Benefit and Advantage of it (as a Man may have an Estate, and reap the Profits of it, tho it lies in a far distant Country) I do

therefore conclude, that the way whereby we do receive, or communicate in, the Body and Blood of Christ, by this Ordinance, is by being made Partakers of those Benefits which by the Crucifying of his Body, and the shedding of his Blood do accrue to us; and that whosoever eats of this Bread, and drinks of this Cup in such a manner as Christ has appointed, has thereby assuredly a share of those Benefits held forth and conveyed unto him.

58. How often this Ordinance is to be practised and repeated in every Congregation, is not expressly determined, neither by Christ, or his Apostles; and therefore can only

be

Part III. Religion. 225

be regulated by the Prudence of the Church it self: But common Reason will tell us, that it should be so often at least, as may be sufficient to preserve a fresh and lively Remembrance of the Sufferings of our Saviour in the minds of the People: this being one main End of its first Institution. And so often therefore ought every Christian, who is arrived to years of understanding (for such only are capable of doing anything in remembrance of another) to come and be partakers of it. For to contemn or neglect this Ordinance, which Christ has appointed for such a peculiar End, argues a great slight and disregard of his Death and Passion

Passion ( besides the Disobedience to his Command ) and therefore is justly to be looked on as a very great and heinous sin.

59. As it is a great Affront, and even a Mocking of God, for a Man to draw near to him in any of his Ordinances, without a sincere and well-meaning heart ( for which Reason Hypocrisy in Scripture is represented as most odious, and the Prayer and Sacrifice of a wicked Man, whilst he continues such, is said to be an Abomination unto God ) so does he seem to resent such a Practice in no instance more than in this of the Holy Communion ; of which he who eats and drinks unworthily, is expressly



bed-ly said by the Apostle to be  
and guilty of the Body and Blood  
book of Christ, and to eat and drink  
nein Damnation to himself: Which  
Expressions altho they are dif-  
ferently interpreted by divers  
cont persons, yet in whatever  
God sense we take them, they do  
him abundantly shew, that God is  
with in a particular manner offen-  
dation ded with those, who any way  
re- profane this sacred Instituti-  
and on. *It therefore is the Duty,*  
of a and ought very much to be the  
ont concern, *of every Christian first,*  
A to *examine himself,* and to make  
does the best trial and enquiry that  
Pra he can, whether he be truly  
than sincere in his resolutions of  
uni serving and obeying God faith-  
and fully all his life-long (for any  
self person who is thus disposed,  
ly and

and none other, is ever acceptable to God) And then with Devotion and Reverence suitable unto such Sincerity, to come and eat of this Bread, and drink of this Cup: That as, on the one side, he may not neglect what Christ has commanded and required; so, on the other, he may not incur the Penalty which is threatened to an unworthy Receiver.

60. He that worships or prays to God by himself alone, may do it as well by offering up only the inward Thoughts and Desires of his Mind, which are clearly seen and known unto God, as by expressing himself outwardly by Words; which tho even in our private Devotions, they may be very proper

Part III. Religion. 299

proper to keep our Minds intent upon what we are about, yet are no way necessary to inform God of what we think or wish for. But when a Society of Men do meet to joyn together in God's worship, their Devotion must of necessity be outwardly expressed in Words; because there is no other way of keeping their Thoughts (wherein their Worship does consist) united and joyned together. And since Words not understood are in effect the same with no Words at all; I conclude, that the Language wherein the Worship of any Church or Congregation is offered up to God, must always be such as is well understood by the Assembly of the People

*ple who meet together.* Nor does even the Doctrine of Transubstantiation amaze me more than that the Church of Rome should own the 14<sup>th</sup>. Chapter of St. Paul's first Epistle to the *Corinthians* to be the Word of God, and yet have all their publick Services every where performed in the Latine Tongue only, which is not now understood by the generality of any Nation in the World.

61. As *Peace and Unity, mutual Love and good Agreement* amongst the Members of every Society, *together with Order and Decency* in all that is transacted amongst them, are absolutely necessary to the being and continuance, or at least

least to the well-being of the Society it self; so are they carefully prescribed and inculcated by Christ and his Apostles, as things *to be always preserved and maintained in the Christian Church.* And as he, who first occasions the violation of any of them, is plainly guilty of a very great sin; so in all Matters that are not particularly and clearly determined by God's Law, we cannot propose a better and safer Rule to our selves, than always to do that which tends most to the advancement and preservation of them.

62. If some certain time be not determined for Christians to meet together for God's Worship, which every Man  
may

232 A Gentleman's  
may know of before it comes,  
and accordingly prepare him-  
self for it by laying aside, for  
that time, his worldly Busi-  
ness; Disorder and Confusion  
(which is the natural Conse-  
quence of Uncertainty) must  
needs follow. That one Day  
at least, in seven was express-  
ly required by God, under the  
Mosaick Law, to be sanctified  
and set apart for his Service,  
is beyond dispute. That the  
Observation of the Jewish Sab-  
bath, or the last Day of the  
Week is not required from the  
Christian Church, to me seems  
very evident from St. Paul's  
reckoning it amongst the tran-  
sitory *Shadows* of the old Law,  
Col. 2. 17. But that we Chri-  
stians ought not to be behind-  
hand

hand with the Jews, in setting apart a proportion of our time for God's Service, I think will follow as well from the great Mercies which we have received from him; for which we, no less than they, ought to shew and express our Thankfulness; as also from that general Rule which our Saviour has given us, that our Righteousness should even exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. And that accordingly one Day in seven, namely the First Day of the Week (which in Scripture is therefore called the Lord's Day, *Rev. 1. 10.*) has ever been so set apart for the Service of God in all Christian Churches, I presume will be

be denied by none; As also, that the Reason of the Apostles making choice of this particular Day, was in remembrance of our Saviour's glorious Resurrection, which on that Day was performed, and whereby their Faith in him, which began to waver, was confirmed and raised above all doubt or diffidence. Now since no Reason can be given, or so much as imagined why this Day should be changed for any other Day of the Week; I do from what has been said conclude, that *the Lord's Day*, or First Day of the Week, ought for ever to be kept holy in the Christian Church; and particularly dedicated to the Service of God. And where either  
the



the Church universal, or any particular Church has set aside any other days to be kept holy, in remembrance either of any of God's Mercies to us; or of the Martyrdom of any of his chosen Saints, who sealed the Truth of the Gospel with their Lives, and transmitted it so confirmed down unto us; or as Days of Fasting or Abstinence, in order to humble our selves before God for our Sins; since in all this there is nothing contrary to God's Law; nor any thing but what may be well consistent with, and serviceable to, true Piety; It will follow from what I have said, § 61. That every Member of such a Church is obliged to keep and observe these same other

other Holy Days, so far as no way to give Scandal, disturb the Order, or break the Peace of the Church, which has established them.

63. Order and Decency necessarily require that all the outward circumstances of Worship, which God himself has not determined by his own Law, should be so settled by the Church, as that all Confusion and Unseemliness therein may, as much as is possible, be avoided. But care on the other side ought ever to be taken, that Modes and Ceremonies be not so multiplied as to become uneasy and burdensome, or distract the Devotion of the People. Now there being no such fixed and demonstrable

monstrable Rules of Decency and Order, but what will have a different relish with different Men, according to their several Educations, and Customs to which they may have been used; it will be very difficult, if not impossible, for any Church so to regulate these external matters as to please every Mans Fancy, and give disgust to none. For what some may think to be but decent, others may take to be too formal or pompous, and what these may apprehend to be suitable to the simplicity of Christianity, another set may look on as mean and jejune. As therefore the Church in this case can do no more, but to act according to the

VI

the best of her Prudence; so  
 since every Man cannot ex-  
 pect to have his particular  
 Fancy in these things pleased  
 and gratified; It will evident-  
 ly appear to be the Duty of each  
 private Christian, so far to com-  
 ply with every such constitution  
 of the Church where he dwells  
 (provided there be nothing in  
 it which is sinful) as not to  
 break the Peace and Unity, nor  
 disturb the Order of the Church  
 on that account. But if any  
 Church shall offer to impose  
 any Ceremonies or practices  
 whatsoever (which God has  
 not prescribed, and which  
 therefore are in themselves in-  
 different) not for Decency  
 and Order; but as things in  
 themselves Holy, or absolute-  
 ly

ly necessary to Salvation (as some of old would have done by the Jewish Ceremonies) with such Impositions as these no Christian ought at all to comply; nor suffer his Religion or Conscience to be thus burthened: But every Man must stand fast in that Liberty wherewith Christ has made us free; tho at the same time he must be very careful not to pretend, or use this Liberty as a Cloke of Maliciousness.

64. Since different Opinions in matters of Religion are generally apt to beget Dissensions and Animosities between those who entertain them, as our daily Experience does abundantly testify, It ought to be the Church's, and every private

private Christian's endeavour,  
 that all Men may become of  
 one and the same Judgment,  
 or at least, that there may be  
 as few Differences amongst  
 them as is possible. *When*  
*therefore any religious Disputes*  
*arise, whereby the Church's*  
*Peace and Unity is like to be*  
*endangered, it is free and pro-*  
*per for (Nor is there any thing*  
*which should hinder) either*  
*the Church universal, or any*  
*particular Church, or even any*  
*prudent Men whatsoever, to*  
*declare and publish their sense of*  
*the matter in debate. But as*  
*no Man can be obliged to be-*  
*lieve the Determination of*  
*any Church or party whatso-*  
*ever, any farther than he is*  
*convinced and satisfied of it*  
 private agree

Part III. Religion. 241

agreement with Reason and the Holy Scriptures, Part 2. §. 1, and 2, so is not any Man bound to oppose or dispute even against an Error it self; except there be something in it which is injurious to Christian Faith or practice; and consequently which may prove pernicious to Men's Salvation. And therefore if such a Mistake, which may have prevailed in any Church, cannot well be rectified without endangering the breach of Peace and Charity (because they who hold it, it may be, are obstinately wedded to it) I think it is the Duty of us all to be very tender in such a case, and to permit every Man freely to abound in his own  
blow M Sense,

342 A Gentleman's

Sense, until such time as God shall think fit to bring them to a clearer sight of the Truth. And by no means to renounce the Communion of any Church on the account of any Error that is not damnable; and much less on account only of such Terms or Expressions as are but abstruse or of doubtful signification. For otherwise since the Apprehensions of Men are so very different (especially in such things as being remote from our Senses are matter only of rational Speculation) if Difference of Opinion upon such theological Questions, as do not immediately concern our Salvation, were a sufficient ground for Separation in point of Communion, there  
M would



would soon be probably as  
much as many Churches as  
Men in the World. But if  
any Church shall require from  
a Man, either to comply with,  
or practise, any thing, which  
is, not only against his Fancy  
in point of Decency or Conve-  
nience, but also against his  
Conscience in point of Law-  
fulness; or that he should not  
only be silent and not oppose,  
but also explicitly profess the  
Belief of, any such Doctrines  
as he judges to be false (how-  
ever innocent the Belief of  
them may be to them who  
think them true) and if such  
a Church shall refuse and de-  
ny her Communion to all  
those who will not joyn with  
her upon these Terms; We

must rather be contented to be excluded from such a Church's Communion, than to purchase it by solemnly telling a down-right Lye before God and the World, or by the violation of any other of God's Commands: For if we offer to do Evil that Good may come of it, *St. Paul* has declared us to be in a state of Damnation.

65. For the due regulation of every Society, it is necessary that it have a Power, somewhere or other vested in it, over its own Members, either to compel them to live orderly, according to its Laws and Constitutions, or, if any of them are disobedient and refractory, and will not, upon

upon due admonition, be reclaimed; wholly to exclude them from the Body of the Community. For, otherwise, if the Members of any Society may at their pleasure break its Constitutions, and violate its Laws without control, this would be wholly to pull down the Enclosure, and lay all open and common, as before; and consequently, in effect to dissolve the Society itself. And accordingly our Saviour has given the Church a Power to admonish and rebuke those who give any scandal by their ungodly and unruly Behaviour; and if upon this they do not repent and reform, of rejecting and cutting them off from her Communion. Which

Authority must ever be exercised with due mildness and caution, for the edification, and not with heat and fury, which in the end would more probably tend to the destruction of the Church. But if any Church shall go beyond this to punish or persecute Men, with Fire and Sword or with Fines and Imprisonment, only for being of a different persuasion from, and refusing to communicate with, her; In my Opinion she herein acts contrary to that Mildness and Gentleness which the Gospel upon all occasions prescribes; and particularly in the case of dealing with those who oppose themselves to it, 2 Tim. 2. 24.

NICHOLAS A. &amp; M.

Altho

Altho at the same time it cannot be denyed, but that if any Man, under the pretence of Conscience, or Religion, shall advance such Doctrines or do such acts as are destructive to the peace or safety of the civil State or Commonwealth; the civil Magistrate may, and ought to punish such a person according to the Laws of the Land, notwithstanding all his pretences. For if the Plea of Conscience (the truth of which can only be known to Almighty God) be sufficient to save any Malefactor from Punishment, no civil Society can ever be safe, and all humane Laws and Magistrates would be wholly useless. See Part 1. p. 35.

M 4 66. And

66. And as Almighty God in his Mercy is pleased not to cut the greatest sinners off from all hopes of pardon; but is ready at any time, upon their true and sincere Repentance, to receive them again into his Favour, so has he committed unto the Church the ministry of Reconciliation; which Church therefore accordingly ought not only to endeavour to bring sinners to Repentance by Preaching, Admonition and Exhortation; but also wherever she sees evident Marks and Tokens of it in any person (of which yet there ought to be good assurance) for his greater comfort and ease of Conscience, to remit or absolve him from his sins,

and

Part III. Religion. 249

and restore him again to the benefit and privilege of *Christian Communion*, of which I suppose that he has, or ought to have, been deprived: And whatever Sentence of thus binding or loosing, remitting or retaining of Men's sins is duly and regularly pronounced by the Church upon Earth, our Saviour assures us it shall be ratified and confirmed by God in Heaven. But that a Man is obliged to make a particular Confession of all his sins unto any other person, except God, in order to obtain the Pardon of, or Absolution from them; as I nowhere find it asserted in the Holy Scripture; so the reason which the Roman Divines

250 A Gentleman's  
do allege for it, is very weak  
and unconcluding: For it is  
not the particular Confession  
of a Man's sins (which may  
be performed by the most  
hardened impenitent) but his  
Contrition, and the visible re-  
formation of his life (which  
may sufficiently appear with-  
out a particular Confession)  
that only can enable the  
Church or her Ministers to  
judge whether he truly re-  
pents of his sins or not, and  
consequently whether he be a  
proper Object of God's Mer-  
cy and the Church's Favour.  
Altho I deny not but that in  
some cases it may be very  
proper for a Man to make  
known the diseases of his  
Soul to a prudent Spiritual  
Physician,



Part III. Religion. 231

Physician, that he may have his advice for the cure of them.

And his Duty also to make an open Confession of his sins whenever it is necessary for God's Glory; or to repair any publick scandal which has been given by him.

67. That Almighty God, even where he has pardoned a Man's sins upon his true Repentance, may yet, on the score of those very sins which he has so pardoned, lay some sharp and severe temporal Afflictions upon the penitent, either to keep him more effectually from sinning for the time to come, or that it may be a Terror to others; or for many other reasons best known to himself, is a thing that

252 A Gentleman's

that cannot be disputed. But from hence to infer, that these temporal Afflictions, if not laid on us in this World, are to be undergone in Purgatory, and that therefore, for the preventing them, it is fit and necessary that *Penance should be imposed by way of satisfaction, or Indulgences granted by way of Remission*; and all this without any Warrant from the Holy Scripture, save only a faint and forced Consequence from some few perverted Texts; is a thing so groundless and precarious, that it amazes me to think how Men can suffer themselves to be so grossly imposed upon. And whosoever shall duly consider upon what weak grounds the

Pope

Pope and his Prelates do pretend to a Power of dispensing and distributing the Merits of Christ unto the People by way of Indulgence (as if they alone had the keeping of that Treasure under Lock and Key; and to which, tho, infinite, they have yet added the Merits of the Saints to make their Treasure more abundant) will, I think, very much wonder that their People should be so free to part with their earthly Treasure in purchasing these Indulgences upon no better security.

68. That the Apostles of Christ, when they were first sent abroad to preach the glad Tidings of the Gospel, did appoint many sick persons with Oyl,

Oyl, and thereby miraculously heal them, we are plainly told by *St. Mark*, c. 6. v. 13. And that in this they did no more than what Christ himself had expressly commanded them, is most reasonable and probable to suppose. Moreover, that the anointing with Oyl, which is mentioned by *St. James*, c. 5. v. 14. was intended for the very same purpose; viz. the raising up the sick person and restoring him to Health, is as apparent as any thing can be from the very Context. But as we do not find that this anointing of the sick was appointed either by Christ or his Apostles, as a standing and perpetual Ordinance for ever to be used in the Church;

*Church*; so since Experience shews, that the miraculous effect of healing thereby is now wholly ceased; I can see no reason why the practice it self should be any longer continued. But what just ground the *Church of Rome* can have from either of these, or any other place of Scripture for the divine Institution of their Extreme *Unction*, which they make use of for a far different end, namely the preparing thereby of persons who are past hopes of recovery, for their passage into the next life, is more than I am able to find out.

69. As the Body natural would be but a confused and useles Lump, if it were not distin-

256 A Gentleman's  
distinguished into the several  
Members, which are necessary  
for its own Service and pre-  
servation : And as the Body-  
politick would be but a dis-  
orderly Rabble, if there were  
not Magistrates settled to rule  
and govern, and ministerial  
Officers appointed to perform  
all necessary Functions in and  
about it ; so the Holy Scrip-  
ture, as well as Reason, af-  
firms us ( and the practice of  
the apostolical Church, which  
is there recorded, confirms it )  
that the like Appointment and  
distinction of Offices are no  
less necessary in the Church ;  
in order to the regular and  
orderly government of it, and  
the due execution of all its  
Laws and Constitutions. But  
how

how far these Offices are limited and appointed by the Law of God, or how far left to be settled, and determined by the Prudence of the Church, according as Circumstances may render it convenient, is what I shall not take upon me to pronounce my Sentence in. But whatever Polity or ecclesiastical Constitution is settled and acquiesced in, either by the whole Church in general, or by that of any Nation or Country in particular, I think, ought quietly to be submitted to by every one who would be a Member of such respective Church, except there appears to him to be either something therein, which is not only uncommanded, but even contrary

258 A Gentleman's  
trary to the Law of God;  
or else something wanting,  
which God requires, and  
therefore is absolutely neces-  
sary to be maintained and  
kept up in all Churches. Nor  
can I apprehend that any less  
Warrant can be sufficient for  
breaking or endangering the  
Peace or Unity of the Church  
(the preservation of which is  
so often and so earnestly re-  
commended to us in the Holy  
Scripture) besides the abso-  
lute necessity of obeying the  
Positive Command of God  
himself. And therefore, since  
the Government of the Church  
by Bishops, that is to say, by  
certain persons having in  
their several Districts a Pri-  
ority among, and in some re-  
pects



spects a Superiority over the Presbyters, has for so many Ages been universally settled amongst, and acquiesced in by, all Christians in all parts of the World; I cannot find how they can be excused, who (without any necessity for so doing) have so earnestly set themselves, not only to retrench the Excesses, and rectifie the Abuses of the episcopal Power; but also to pull down, and wholly abolish, the very Order it self; to the no small scandal of those who think that so universal a Constitution, every where taking place, even in the primitive Church, could be grounded on no less than an Apostolick Ordinance (of which

which there seems to be some, not obscure, Foot-steps in the Scriptures of the New Testament) and that most probably in conformity to that Imparity which Christ himself established between the Apostles and the seventy Disciples; who were yet both commissioned by him to preach the Gospel.

70. How far a case of necessity may, upon some occasions, excuse or justify a Man for taking on him an Office which regularly does not belong to him, especially if his design therein be truly honest and sincere, I know not. But no Man certainly ought to intrude into any ecclesiastical Function; or exercise any  
*such*

such Office, which is not called and admitted thereto by the lawful Authority, and according to the established Constitutions of the Society. For if this be not carefully observed, the distinction of Offices and Functions in the Church is in effect wholly taken away; and a wide Door opened for Confusion and Anarchy. But then on the other side, good care ought ever to be taken by the Church, that no persons be entrusted with any sacred Office, but such as are duly qualified for it; And that such a Maintenance be provided and settled for every such person, as that he may not be necessitated to neglect the publick Service of God and the due exercise

exercise of his Function, by being constrained to bestow and spend overmuch of his Time and Labour in getting a Living for himself and his Family.

71. I have now gone through what I at first designed, and have not, that I know of, omitted any one thing which I could judge to be a material or necessary part of Religion. Altho I have on purpose endeavoured to avoid the use of some Words, which do frequently occur in all or most Systems of Divinity, that I have met with; And the reason why I have so done, is not that I find fault with the Words themselves; but because I would have my Reader

der take notice that Religion does not consist in Terms of Art or forms of expression; but in the belief and practice of such things as God has made known, and requires from us; And it is too common among Men to wrangle about Words, before they have clearly fixed and agreed upon the meaning of them. I have not, for example, made use of this Term *Justification*; But yet I have endeavoured to shew upon what conditions a sinner obtains the Pardon of his sins and Mercy at the hand of God; which is the same thing; Nor have I said any thing of the nature or number of *Sacraments*: But I have spoken what I thought might be necessary

cessary concerning Baptism, the Holy Communion, and those other things which the Church of Rome calls by that name. And if once I am satisfied touching any thing, how far God requires it from us, and whether or no it be necessary to Salvation; I cannot see why I should trouble my self much in enquiring, whether such a thing may properly be called a Sacrament or not, which to me seems no more but a dispute about the meaning of a Word. True indeed, it is, that in the Doctrine of the Trinity, which I have delivered, Part 2. §. 22. I have expressly made use of the Terms *person, substance, &c.* because I could find none others

thers so fit and proper to express my Thoughts ; Nor durst I venture in so sublime a matter to apply new Words to those things of which I can have but very imperfect and obscure Conceptions. And having thus said all that I intend upon this occasion, I freely submit the Whole to the Judgment and Censure of every Reader ; leaving him to that liberty which I my self always desire to enjoy ; and being ready to retract any thing that I have said, whenever I am convinced that I have been therein mistaken.

Books Printed for Richard Sare.

The Fables of *Esop* with Morals and Reflections, Folio.

*Elisabel* Colloquies in *English*, 8°

*Quintus* Visions, 8°.

These 2 by Sir Roger L'Estrange.

The Genuine Epistles of St. *Barnabas*, St. *Ignatius*, St. *Clement*, St. *Polycarp*, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, &c. Translated and published in *English*, 8°.

A Practical Discourse concerning Swearing, 8°.

The Authority of Christian Princes over Ecclesiastical Synods, in Answer to a Letter to a Convocation Man, 8°.

Sermons on several Occasions, 4°.

These by Dr. *Wake*.

*Epictetus*'s Morals with *Simplicius*'s Coment, 8°.

A Sermon Preached upon the Death of the Queen.

Both by Mr. *George Stanhope*.

The Doctrine of a God and Providence



## Books Printed for R. Sare.

dence vindicated and asserted, 8°.

Discourses on several Divine Subjects, 8°. These two by Thomas Gregory, Lecturer of Fulham.

Dr. Gregory's Divine Antidote, in Answer to an Heretical Pamphlet, Entituled an End to the Socinian Controversy, 8°.

Essays upon several Moral Subjects, in two parts, by Jeremy Collier, M. A. 8°.

Compleat Sets, consisting of 8 Volumes of Letters writ by a *Turkish Spy* who lived 45 Years at *Paris* undiscovered, giving an account of the Principal Affairs of Europe, 12°.

Humane Prudence, or the Art by which a man may raise himself and Fortune to Grandure, 12°.

Moral Maxims and Reflections, written in *French* by the Duke of *Rochefauscault*, now *Englisht*, 12°.

Of the Art both of writing and judging of History, with Reflections upon *Ancient* as well as *Modern Historians*. By Father *Le Moyne*. 12°.

An Essay upon Reason, by Sir George *Mackenzie*, 12°.

Death made comfortable, or the way to

## Books Printed for R. Sare.

to dye well. By *John Kettlewell*. 12°.

The Parson's Counsellor, or the Law of Tyths. By *Sir Simon Degg*. 8°.

The Unlawfulness of Bonds of Resignation, 8°. Price 6 d.

An Answer to all the Excuses and Pretences which Men ordinarily make for their not coming to the Holy Sacrament, 8°. Price 3 d. by a Divine of the Church of England.

Remarks on a Book Entituled, Prince Arthur an Heroick Poem, by *Mr. Denis*, 8°.

---

# FINIS.

re.

. 12<sup>o</sup>  
Law

f Re-

excuse  
parily  
Ho-  
a Di-

ruled,  
n, by

on

on

on

on

on

on

on

on

on

on

on

on

on

on

on

on

on

on

on

on

on

on

on

on

on

on